DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 352 687 CS 508 019

AUTHOR Garmston, Robert J.; Wellman, Bruce M.
TITLE How To Make Presentations That Teach and Transform.
INSTITUTION Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, Va.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-87120-199-2
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 115p.
AVAILABLE FROM Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1250 N. Pitt St., Alexandria, VA 22314 ($6.95).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Adults; Audience Awareness; Guidelines; *Speech Communication; Speech Instruction; *Speech Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Oral Presentations; Stage Fright

ABSTRACT

A practical guide to designing and delivering interesting and effective presentations for adult audiences, this book covers the five stages of a presentation and offers tips for executing each one. The book discusses stage fright and how to use it, and it explores the use of macro maps for staying focused during presentations. The book also provides tips for getting to know audiences and communicating with participants who have different backgrounds and learning styles. Chapters in the book are: (1) How to Design for Learning; (2) Five Presentation Stages; (3) Maintaining Confidence; (4) Knowing Your Audience; (5) Communicating with the Entire Brain; (6) Making Learning Active; and (7) The Presenter as Social Architect. A presentation logistics checklist and 12 learner-centered psychological principles are attached. (RS)

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How to Make Presentations that Teach and Transform

Robert J. Garmston and Bruce M. Wellman

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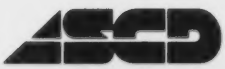

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How to Make Presentations that Teach and Transform

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Printed in the United States of America.

Ronald S. Brandt, *Executive Editor*
Nancy Modrak, *Managing Editor, Books*
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Gary Bloom, *Manager, Design and Production Services*
Valerie Sprague, *Desktop Typesetter*

ASCD Stock Number: 611-92147

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Garmston, Robert J.
How to make presentations that teach and transform / Robert J. Garmston and Bruce M. Wellman.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references (p.).
ISBN 0-87120-199-2 : $6.95
1. Public speaking. 2. Visual communication. I. Wellman, Bruce M. II. Title.
PN4121.G3118 1992
808.5'1—dc20 92-3905
CIP

How To Make Presentations that Teach and Transform

Getting Started iv

1. How to Design for Learning 1

2. Five Presentation Stages 21

3. Maintaining Confidence 35

4. Knowing Your Audience 43

5. Communicating with the Entire Brain 56

6. Making Learning Active 71

7. The Presenter as Social Architect 90

Sources 99

Appendixes 102

Getting Started

A good teacher takes you somewhere else.
An excellent teacher changes you where you are.

— Kazuaki Tanahashi (1990)

A PRESENTATION IS A GIFT. THE PACKAGING, THE CONTENTS, AND THE manner in which the gift is presented determine its value to the receiver. Thoughtful gifts focus on the receiver's needs and desires. They are not hastily pulled off the shelf, gift-wrapped by an impersonal salesclerk, and thrust into the hands of a startled recipient. Rather, they are thoughtfully selected, carefully wrapped, and presented with just the right amount of surprise—and timing.

This book, too, is a gift. It is built upon several assumptions about you, the reader, and your interests.

Assumptions About You as the Reader of this Book

Our first assumption is that you have teaching experience that may range from guiding your own children at home, to classroom teaching, to work in college or graduate school settings. This experience is a resource for presenting to adults. Presentations, whether they last an hour or a day, are teaching events that require goals and objectives, lesson designs, and measures of achievement.

Our second assumption is that you have an array of presentation experiences to draw upon. In our professional and nonprofessional lives we all participate in lectures, seminars, and workshops as both presenters and audience participants. Some of these events are sublime. Some are not. We can draw upon these experiences to borrow what works and consciously avoid what does not when we design presentations.

Our third assumption is that you desire presentation mastery and are looking for a practical resource to help you extend your knowledge and skills. This is most likely the reason you chose to read this book in the first place. Presentation artistry can be learned. It is not something given at birth; it is something that you must develop. Like all complex sets of skills, there is a learning curve with ascents, descents, plateaus, and surprising moments of flawless integration and mastery.

Our final assumption is that you want to make a difference. You want to share your expertise with others and help your audiences learn and take action. You want to avoid making presentations that may get standing ovations but leave audiences with nothing to chew on. Your goal is a balanced presentation—valuable content in appropriate quantities. Servings that make a difference.

Suggested Ways to Use this Book

We hope this book will be a tool you can use to refine your own skills or teach others about presenting. We have included a collection of practical maps, graphics, tools, and recipes for your perusal and adaptation. You can read this book cover-to-cover or dive right into sections that address your specific, immediate interests. We hope you will use it as a reference guide and planning tool. The following synopsis of the chapters might help you decide where to begin your presentation planning.

Chapter 1—How to Design for Learning. In this chapter we explore the essential issues of presentation design: what we know about audiences, the presenter's stance in relationship to the audience, macro maps that guide presentations, presentation frameworks, selecting objectives, planning for outcomes beyond objectives, managing the content and process ratio, and four powerful design perspectives.

Chapter 2—Five Presentation Stages. This chapter explains five presentation stages: Before the Opening, Openings, Delivering the Content (the body of the presentation), Closings, and After the Close.

Chapter 3—Maintaining Confidence. In this section we examine ways to stay emotionally resourceful, build confidence, achieve the physiology of high performance, and provide techniques for mental rehearsal.

Chapter 4—Knowing Your Audience. Here we focus on ways to detect and work with audience differences before and during presentations. We give you a variety of potential differences to consider and strategies for monitoring and adjusting to these as your presentation progresses.

Chapter 5—Communicating with the Entire Brain. Good presentations engage each participant's whole brain. In this chapter we offer verbal and nonverbal strategies for whole-brain communication, including the uses of body language, voice tonality, language, presentation graphics, and humor.

Chapter 6—Making Learning Active. This chapter presents a variety of strategies and structures for active learning, including ways to get the audience's permission to engage in active learning, strategies for forming and reforming groups, and ways to elicit and answer questions and handle comments.

Chapter 7—The Presenter as Social Architect. Lastly, we examine the presenter as a social architect who helps to create and develop learning organizations. The goal is to bring about personal and cultural change by developing presentations that are nonepisodic and connect to greater organizational purposes.

In true learning communities we all present and we all learn. We all coach and are coached. We all consult and are consulted. Presentation skills need to become more than the province of a select few. When they are internalized and broadly shared, they help individuals and groups meet the goals of schooling.

1
How to Design for Learning

THIS MAY BE THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAPTER IN THIS BOOK BECAUSE, as we shall see, all presentations are made twice—first in the presenter's mind, during the design stage, and second, during the actual presentation. Eighty-five percent of the quality of the second presentation is a product of the first. The remaining 15 percent comes from personal energy, charisma, and our openness to serendipitous relationships with our audience. In planning presentations we must remember the carpenter's adage, "Measure twice and cut once."

What You Must Know About Yourself

The most important design questions are about you. A presentation is a point in time within a relationship between a speaker and an audience. Who you are, not what you know, is the dominant message in any presentation. Who you are, in relation to what you know, is critically important self-knowledge that helps you make decisions about what's important to communicate and how to communicate it. This self-knowledge gives your message congruence and credibility.

Of the four cornerstone questions of presentation design, three are generic and applicable to all settings for which you may be planning a presentation: Who are you? About what do you care? How much do you dare? The fourth question is more audience-specific: What are your intended outcomes?

Who Are You?

Whenever you step before a group of people to persuade, provide information, or develop new learnings, you unconsciously choose to bring certain parts of yourself into the relationship. Which parts will you invite to the event in order to be multidimensionally present with the audience, and more interesting and credible? Are you a parent, spouse, daughter, sports fan, potter, skier, photographer, or poet? Are you a gardener, only child, gourmet cook, speaker of several languages? Your goal in selecting an answer to this question is to reduce the psychological distance between yourself and the audience. Therefore, the question "Who are you?" can also be thought of as "Who do you want to be with this particular audience?"

In *Speak Like a Pro*, Margaret Bedrosian (1987) suggests five stances from which presenters might choose to speak. Each has a distinct base of power and a distinct approach. Speakers may use more than one of these stances during a single presentation.

1. Boss. This stance is based on positional authority. When speaking from this stance, you support your ideas with the organization's history, mission, policies, goals, and procedures. The downside of this stance is that many audience members will listen to the position more than the presentation. Because of this, your words and demeanor can have far more impact than you intend.

2. Expert. From this stance you share information and correct misinformation. In order to present as an expert, you must stay current in all the latest developments in your field. Your power in this stance comes from being able to synthesize enormous amounts of information from your area of expertise and present it in tight, coherent forms. The downside of this stance is that the expert role is the one most vulnerable to attack.

3. Colleague. In this stance you reduce perceived distance between yourself and the members of your audience by being one of them. As a colleague, you present information while being open to discovering new information from others. You refer to work experiences of your own that are similar to the audience's. Your speech includes the collegial "we" and "us." You elicit data from the

group and then extend the data. Many presenters find that this is the most effective stance when presenting to their own faculties.

4. Sister/Brother. In this stance you communicate concern and warmth. You appeal to the family spirit of a healthy working team. You share the ups and downs of your own learning journey. This is often an effective stance for coaching individuals or groups to better performance. You are more approachable than the boss or expert, and let the audience members know you have a caring investment in their success. A possible downside in this stance is that certain audience members may feel encouraged to share highly personal learning problems with the hope that you can help resolve them.

5. Novice. This stance is based on enthusiasm. You share recent discoveries and their meaning with the audience. While you admit to lacking a comprehensive background, you must be well-informed about recent discoveries and have immersed yourself in the topic at hand. The freshness of your approach and your vitality can renew or awaken the interest of your audience.

About What Do You Care?

Who you are is predominantly related to your personal values. To answer the question "What do I care about?" you must identify what is important to you, not as a laundry list of personal values, but in a search for the core of what motivates and concerns you. For example, if you value classrooms as learning communities in which students are interactive learners invested in each other's success, these values will permeate your presentation design and processes. Elegant presenters have conscious access to such personal values and deliver presentations that are unusually powerful because of the congruence of both their message and metamessages.

How Much Do You Dare?

If you value risk-taking, what will you risk in the presentation—a song, a silly energizer, a new design? If you value certain psychological principles of learning, will you

speak your mind if your view is contrary to a newly adopted curriculum?

To know your own values, and act on them, you must engage in a feedback loop of continuous growth and self-improvement, trust your own capacity for self-management, and work to enhance your self-esteem. If *you* can trust you, so can audiences and others. You will generate a sense of personal efficacy.

How much *should* you dare? When your personal risk quotient in any area is less than you like, here is one way of checking to see if this is a common sense posture of personal security from which to operate. Examine what rewards or punishments exist in the environment should you speak up for principles dear to you. Then ask yourself about the degree of importance you attach to each reward and punishment. Often you'll discover that you can't be hurt enough to deter you from acting on your values. Other times you may decide to place personal safety above other considerations. When you dare, dare smart. Don't get removed from the game in the process.

As we have seen, three of the four cornerstone design questions are generic and contribute to life stances as well as presentation skills: Who are you? What do you care about? How much do you dare? The fourth cornerstone question is related to each specific audience and presentation event.

What Are Your Intended Outcomes?

What do you want participants to carry away from your session? Presenters must consider this question from two vantage points, the macro, or bird's eye, view and the micro, or worm's eye, view.

Macro outcomes resonate from our core values, concerns, passions, and missions in life. A presenter who values a rigorous interchange of ideas might consistently elicit divergent views, respond candidly to audience questions, or incorporate exercises in which partners would identify alternative ways of viewing an issue. This might become part of a person's presentation design even though the session topic is math manipulatives and has "nothing to do" with communication. The presenter thus

models a personal core value and enrolls audience members in that value.

In contrast, the micro-outcomes relate specifically to your presentation topic. What knowledge, skills, attitudes, or actions do you want for your listeners? As we shall see, there are ways to answer this question with precision and power without succumbing to the agony of developing behavioral objectives.

Achieving Outcomes: Three Macro Maps

A macro map is one that displays an entire territory so the map reader can plot reasonable destinations and routes. It gives the user a *way* of looking at the territory through certain lenses. On a backpacking trip the macro map allows the hiker to see the boundaries of the wilderness region, the two or three major established trails in the area, the distance in miles (but not in perspiration or fatigue) between two points, and the valleys, rivers, meadows, and mountains that make up the area. It is only from this comprehensive picture of the land that the hiker can set overall goals for the trip; because once on the forest trail, the hiker's visibility is reduced to the bend ahead, and aspirations can be diverted by emotional and physical fatigue. Unexpected events like a blistered foot or a rest at an idyllic stream can take the hiker off course. It is knowledge of the map of the whole that allows the traveler to flexibly engage with these distractions yet still achieve intended outcomes.

Like the hiker, presenters with conscious access to their macro maps for presentations can make decisions during presentations that are congruently related to their overall objectives. They can seize opportunities, unrecognized without the maps, to move a group toward envisioned destinations.

The following are three macro maps that guide the design work of premier presenters. We explore other macro maps in Chapter 7 in relation to facilitating transformational change for individuals and organizations.

Macro Map 1: Always Speak to Four Audiences

Bob Garmston once watched a performer in a Beirut nightclub present to an audience in which some spoke Arabic, some French, and some English. Like the carnival performer who spins a series of plates on sticks, this trilingual performer balanced his time in the three languages, being careful not to spend too much time in any one language for fear that a segment of his audience might feel left out and grow bored. In a similar manner, because of learning style preferences and variations in the ways people intake and process information, presenters attend to at least four different types of audience members in each presentation: those seeking facts, data, and references; those wishing to relate the topic to themselves through interaction with colleagues; those who wish to reason and explore; and, finally, those interested in adapting, modifying, and creating new ideas and procedures as a result of attending the presentation.

We describe presentation techniques for these four audiences in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Macro Map 2: Leverage Presentation Time by Choosing the Most Powerful Levels of Intervention

Bateson (1972) and Dilts, Hallbomgo, and Smith (1990) have identified a hierarchy of intervention levels for transformational change. Each level corresponds to a human characteristic at which the presenter focuses his change effort. The levels, in ascending order of ability to produce powerful change, are (1) behaviors, (2) capabilities (the mental strategies that guide behavior), (3) beliefs, and (4) identity.

Chapter 7 covers strategies for working at each of these intervention levels.

Macro Map 3: Empower the Audience

Because feeling empowered is the first step in being empowered, the best presenters consistently aim at helping audiences obtain this feeling. After all, perception shapes reality. This is the true nature of cause-and-effect. Central to being empowered is a sense of efficacy. This state of mind

helps people to believe themselves capable of taking charge and producing results.

Presenters help audiences feel efficacious with a number of subtle moves. They provide choice. Where to sit, how long the break should be, what personal goals should be worked on, who to partner with, and which homework suggestions to pursue. Presenters also consistently use language that presupposes efficacy. "As you decide what's most important to you . . . ." "As you tell others what learnings you have constructed from this day. . . ." "As you recall previous successes. . . ." "Knowing that you are busy people, and intend to produce as much value for yourself as possible today. . . ." "As you examine your strengths. . . ."

Efficacy is enhanced when participants help shape agendas to their needs, when they teach others, when they control their own learning goals and environment, and when they look at their own behaviors from the perspective of choice. Presenters promote this viewpoint when they respond to participant statements such as, "there's just too much to cover, and not enough time," with language that *reminds* the participants that despite existing environmental constraints, they always maintain choice: "So you're in the process of deciding which portions of the curriculum are most important for your students."

Because educational goals are achieved through collections of people, it makes sense to speak to people individually in ways that allow each person to learn best; to promote awareness of personal identities that are caring, collaborative, and successful; and to continuously shape efficacy in ourselves, our audiences, and our students. Hikers must know "they can" to complete the journey, but it is the traveler who knows the territory who attains the outcome and enjoys the trip.

Choosing a Presentation Framework

Now, within the ever-present context of these powerfully influencing macro maps, which presentation framework is best?

Presenters save planning time by plugging their information and creative thoughts into an established

format. Research also clearly shows that listeners remember better and remember more if they have a sense of the shape of the talk. Because a grasp of the pattern is important to participant understanding of your material, the best technique is to make each individual section, as well as the overall organization, simple, logical, and clear. The best presenters make the organization of their talk boldly obvious to their listeners.

Here are seven time-tested, logical frameworks you might work with:

Time Sequence

This framework is used to explain something in the exact order in which it occurred or happened in real time. For example: "First we discovered that students had rote knowledge of math and limited problem-solving capacities. Next we explored alternative approaches to our curriculum. Lastly, we decided to incorporate manipulative materials into our math program. Let me describe our central findings at each of these stages."

Question-Answer

This presentation framework is logically built from answers to one or more key questions. To create this structure, first identify all major questions you feel need to be answered and any extra questions your audience will likely want answered. Then, simply consolidate both lists of questions into one unified sequence. This sequence becomes your question-answer framework. For example:

[OPENING]	"Today, we'll answer three basic questions: First, how did the project begin? Second, how has it evolved? And third, how is it unique?"
[BODY]	"Let's start with how the project began . . ." "Now, let's see how it has evolved . . ." "Finally, let's look at how it is unique. . ?"
[CLOSING]	"In summary, we have answered three basic questions . . ."

Three Ideas

This is used to focus listeners on important concepts or issues related to a topic. You might use this as an advanced organizer from which you can provide extensive elaboration or to highlight areas a group should consider in reaching a decision.

[OPENING]	"Three goals form the driving force in the Cognitive Coaching model. First, trust in the teacher-coach relationship. Second, continuing and accelerated learning for both parties. And third, a mutual state of autonomy characterized by both professional independence and interdependence."
[BODY]	"Let's start by defining what we mean by trust, how it's elicited and maintained, and why it's important in the coaching relationship."
[CLOSING]	"So today we have identified the three goals each Cognitive Coach keeps in mind . . ."

These first three frameworks can also serve as lightning quick organizers for impromptu speeches. Using one of these frameworks allows you to arrange in your head a simple, logical set of mental notes from which to speak in the amount of time it takes the president of the school board to ask for your input on a topic and for you to position yourself in a speaking posture.

Startling Statement/Reasons—Solutions

This framework opens by boldly stating a problem in a manner designed to achieve a psychological state of intense alertness and focus that grabs the listeners' undivided attention. The speaker then follows with possible causes and a call to consider certain approaches to solutions. For example:

[STARTLING STATEMENT]	"For the tragic majority of American high school students, classrooms are bleak, lonely, emotional wastelands. For over 30

years, this has been a consistent research finding, and, unless we do something structurally different with our schools, it is likely to remain so."

[REASONS] "Teachers are not unfeeling automatons or ogres. What contributes to this persistent situation? Teachers teach every day. This in itself is exhausting. But to reach out positively and supportively to four to six successive classes of twenty-five or more students every day, every week, every semester, may be impossible."

[SOLUTION] "We must allow students the emotional attention and academic depth that can only come from longer instructional blocks of time with a teacher. Here is how we might pursue this . . . ."

Problem-Solution

One of our favorite variations of the problem-solution framework was developed by Communication Development Associates (Figure 1.1). It contains nine steps presented in a specific order.

When organizing this type of presentation you'll find that it helps to plan item 5 first (the solution), then outline item 2 (the problem), and develop your anecdote near the end of your planning.

Spatial Order

This framework consists of describing the parts of an object that occupies space. For example, in describing early childhood classrooms, the design of the classroom facility could be presented starting with the classroom meeting corner and moving through various learning centers in the classroom, with attention to movement patterns and the educational thinking behind the design. This framework has limited use but is quite effective.

Topical Grouping

If your topic is large and no other framework seems exactly right, you might try a topical grouping: divide the

Figure 1.1
The Problem-Solution Framework

Anecdote. "Last week I watched a well-prepared presenter struggle to get the group on task. It took over an hour before productive learning began to occur."

The problem. "How can presenters quickly capture the interest and energy of a group?"

Importance. "This is an important problem because norms are established in the first 3-5 minutes of a presentation. Momentum, not started at first, will take a long time to develop."

Credibility. "I've observed other presentations, I'm reading the literature, and I'm conducting hundreds of my own presentations."

Solution. "The solution is to develop compelling openings."

Subpoints. "To do this, presenters attend to three goals: (1) topic focus, (2) energize listeners, and (3) audience rapport."

Essential details. (This becomes the body of the presentation.) "Here are ways to develop topic focus: describe goals, present agenda, use a shock statement, metaphor. To energize listeners you can use buzz groups, movement, and birthday line up. To gain audience rapport, stand still at the opening, hold before-session conversations, comfort needs, be personal, and use humor."

Futures. "As you use these ideas, your next opening will be very well received."

Action. "Take time tonight to outline your next opening using this framework."

overall topic into several subtopics and discuss each in turn. For the topic "Facilitating the Learning Organization," you might create the subtopics of organizational competencies, professional competencies, and leadership functions. Likewise, you might discuss "The Human Body" by looking at each of its major subsystems: skeletal, circulatory, digestive, and so on.

Topical grouping is a common pattern and usually easy to create, but it's also less original and less compelling than other options. It is always best to first explore other design options.

A Way to Think About Your Presentation

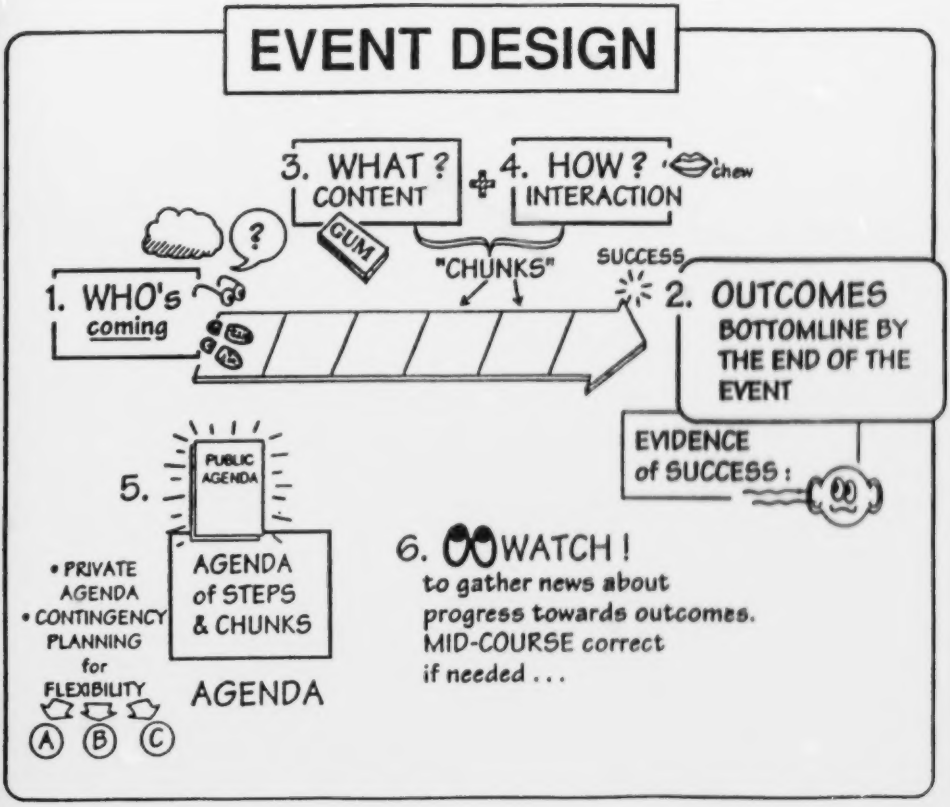
Suzanne Bailey of Bailey and Associates in Vacaville, California, offers the following graphic display of how presenters think when designing a presentation event.

As depicted at step 1 in Figure 1.2, Bailey, like most authorities, believes that gathering information about the audience is a critical preparation step for presenters. What perspectives will participants bring to the presentations? What knowledge and skills do they already have? Of what relevance is your topic to their daily realities? What might be occurring in their work environments that might contribute to poor feelings even if absolutely unrelated to your presence or topic?

In one organization in which we worked, members had received a memo the week before our presentation, which stated that too many employees were rated "excellent" the previous year, the first year in a new evaluation system. The memo went on to say that the situation would be corrected by doing additional training with supervisors so that fewer people would be rated in this highest category. That audience was understandably *not* receptive that day and it had nothing to do with what we were presenting!

The design questions that stem from step 2 are, "What outcomes do you wish your listeners to have by the end of the event?" and "How will you know that they have achieved them?" These are probably the most difficult, and most useful, questions presenters ask themselves. Steps 3 and 4 ask the presenter to examine two additional

Figure 1.2
Event Design



questions, "What content will you introduce?" and "How will you provide people an opportunity to interact with the content in ways that support their memory and learning?" Step 5 involves the preparation of both a public and a private agenda. We have learned that our public agenda should include a very simple and logical framework presented with broad strokes and limited detail. Our private agenda, however, is richer, more detailed, and may have backup plans for certain contingencies.

Doyle and Strauss (1976) use the metaphor of gum and chewing to describe the dilemma that meeting facilitators face with content and process. The issue for presenters is similar. Consider "gum" to be the content you bring to your audience. Consider "chewing" to be the interactive process you provide to assist participants in receiving, processing, and applying the content. How much gum and how much chewing you provide becomes a dominant question in presentation design.

Scaffolding Your Presentation Event

The event design model displayed in Figure 1.2 provides the presenter with a way of thinking about the event in its totality. Within this context, a simple scaffolding is useful to help presenters think about the overall organization of the event. Figure 1.3 shows a generic presentation scaffolding of the sequential order in which events would occur.

Before the presentation, provide time for informal welcoming, relationship building, and final data-gathering about participants. Presenters can do this most effectively by arriving at least 45 minutes before the session to check on logistical arrangements.

In step 1 the presenter formally welcomes the group and is introduced or provides a brief verbal biography. In step 2 the presenter gives an overview of the topic, stating its relevance to this particular audience, the outcomes the presenter intends to achieve during the allotted time, and the framework that organizes the presentation.

Step 3 represents the body of the presentation. For each major point, the presenter provides processing time for integration of concepts; mini-reviews to aid retention,

Figure 1.3
A Generic Presentation Scaffolding

i.	Informal welcome (before the opening)
1.	Welcome and self-introduction
2.	Overview of topic
	Relevance
	Outcomes
	Present presentation framework
3.	Major points
	Processing
	Mini-Reviews
	Bridging
4.	Summary
5.	Evaluation
ii.	Informal follow-ups (after the close)

checks for understanding, reminds people where they are in the framework and bridging opportunities so that people can transfer the information to their own jobs. In step 4 the presenter provides a summary of what has occurred and selects an appropriate close. Step 5 provides for an evaluation of the event. Step ii, like step i, occurs outside the formal presentation. This step is an opportunity for additional questions to be answered and follow-up discussion to take place with individual audience members. Chapter 2 details presentation strategies for each of these steps.

Selecting Outcomes and Objectives

So much educational literature has been written about outcomes and objectives that we hesitate to add our voice. However, we have found that despite educators' general sophistication in this area, much of the known information is forgotten during presentation planning for adults. So,

allow us to make a few points here that we have found most useful in the seminar settings in which we've worked with participants on this topic.

First, let's attempt to distinguish between an outcome and an objective. An outcome represents an end point in a journey. Objectives represent stepping stones to getting there. For example, our good friend Diane Zimmerman, an experienced school administrator, tells the story about going canoeing with her husband. She sat in the bow of the canoe, he in the stern. He said to her, "Diane, paddle on the left. Now paddle on the right. On the left Diane, more strokes. Diane, on the right." Finally, Diane, in frustration, turned around and glared at Rich as if she were ready to hit him with the paddle. "Rich," she said, just tell me what our intended outcome is." Rich looked at her for a moment then said, "Oh, Diane, what we're trying to do is to keep the canoe in the middle of the river." "Ok," she said, "Then I don't need any more instructions on where to paddle."

Outcomes serve as feedback mechanisms to tell us when we are off course in achieving a desired result with a group. As long as the canoe was approximately in the middle of the river, Diane knew she was meeting her outcome. One of the most frequently ignored characteristics of a good outcome is that it must be attainable within the amount of time the presenter has to work with a group. A well-formed outcome is also observable, that is to say, there is some way that you can gather evidence at the end of the presentation that will indicate your degree of success. By evidence, we do not mean laboriously constructed behavioral objectives. If one of your outcomes is that teachers will leave a presentation willing to test some new cooperative learning techniques, comments such as, "Gee, this was an interesting session" may be the kiss of death regarding that particular outcome. What you want to hear are questions such as, "How would I do it if X happened?" This tells you that participants are engaged in mentally solving problems related to their classrooms so that they can implement the ideas you've presented.

Good presentation outcomes are always related to some larger purpose. This can include the presenter's macro maps as well as larger organizational goals or aims.

Objectives, on the other hand, can be thought of as the elements in a task analysis aimed at achieving an outcome. The critical question guiding the construction of objectives is: What do participants need to learn to reach an outcome? What knowledge, skills, attitudes, and actions are required?

Good presenters also have outcomes for optimum learning states which contribute to accelerated learning. Perhaps one of the most important things that the presenter does is to keep group members in states of resourcefulness. These are states of psychological arousal in which reactions are quickened, some time distortion may exist, focus is sharp, and learning is enhanced. Excitement, curiosity, intrigue, humor, efficacy, and heightened consciousness are all examples of optimum learning states. These transitory states, combined with the "I want to learn" and "I am capable of learning" attitudes, create powerful fuel for the learning process.

These psychological outcomes live side by side with cognitive goals and are equally important, if not more important, than the ones in the cognitive domain.

When we work with audiences on the topic of presentation design, we give them three criteria for a successful presentation: (1) the presenter has a clear outcome, (2) the presenter has a clear outcome, and (3) the presenter is clear about the outcome!

How Much Content?

How do you know the appropriate content/process ratio to provide?

Several years ago Bob Garmston delivered the worst presentation he had ever done. Not only did the audience know it was bad, Bob knew it was bad, yet he couldn't stop himself from engaging in counterproductive behaviors.

Why did he persist? Because of good intentions, overzealousness, and the misguided notion that delivering content is what presentations are about. He had been scheduled for a three-hour Friday night presentation and a full-day Saturday session. The topic was meeting facilitation. A heavy rainstorm delayed his flight so he missed the Friday evening session entirely. He resolved to "make up" the content participants had lost by collapsing the one-and-a-half-day presentation into Saturday's time

slot. The distressed faces of those trapped participants are still burned into his memory, making the experience so painful that he learned an irreversible lesson about the balance of content/process in presentations: *The content is not as important as the audience's interaction with the content!*

What Bob learned on that painful rainy day is that the presenter's content has limited value unless audience members understand it. Real understanding may require additional presentation time to let the audience interact with the data. This simple realization removes the burden of feeling that you must always follow your plan, report all your research, or use all your notes.

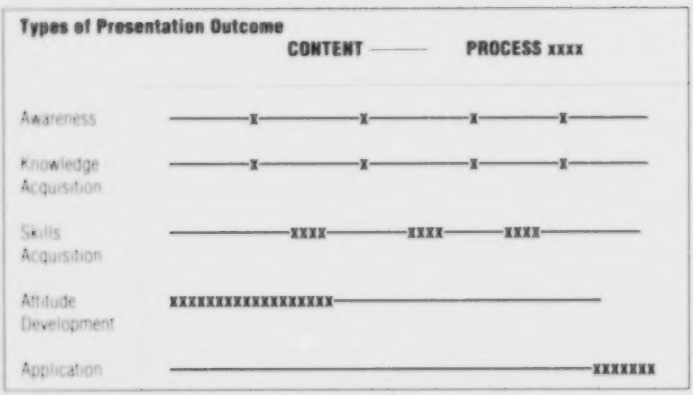
Having made your many decisions during the design stage, including decisions about the types of presentation outcomes and the size of the conceptual units to present, you must remain open to making decisions during the actual presentation. During the presentation, judgments must be made about degrees of learning accomplishment, unanticipated needs of the learners, rapport, and participant resourcefulness. These "show time" perceptions often override the decisions made during the planning stage.

While content/process ratios can't be described in percentages, a logical progression of increased processing time exists as your outcomes move from the participants' acquisition of knowledge to development of their attitudes, skills, and commitment to apply learnings (see Figure 1.4).

The purposes and types of processes vary according to the presenter's outcome. To develop *awareness* and *knowledge*, presentations are often information intensive. Listeners must be given opportunities to mentally organize the data, check their understandings, and compare the data to personal experiences. Without this, a highly dense information presentation will put participants in a position of sustained passive listening, but not learning, because the learner's manipulation of information is essential to creating personal relevance and retention.

For *attitude* outcomes, the primary purpose of presentation processes may be to help participants make meaning of an experience. Figure 1.4 shows processing occurring before content delivery to illustrate just one of many designs to stimulate attitude change. In this design, an experience (a process) is followed by an analysis (more process) of the experience.

Figure 1.4
Content/Process Ratios and Timing



Because the limit of working memory is about seven items of information, in highly technical presentations no more than five important facts should be presented before participants have a chance to process the data. For less fact-intensive content, processing time might be planned to occur at regular fifteen- to twenty-minute intervals.

Bob Garmston was recently reminded of this as he began the afternoon of a full-day session:

> The public agenda read "Coaching Competencies." The agenda was so artfully vague, I could eliminate portions of my planned (but not communicated) content without participants feeling they were missing out on anything. This gave me time to address their need to interact and relate the content I was presenting to their own experiences. In this case, more process time than I had planned was crucial for participants to be able to accept a new perspective. My broadly painted public agenda and reading of participants allowed

me to drop content, meet the unanticipated needs of the group, and not repeat my earlier, painful experience (Garmston 1992a).

In the next chapter, we explore strategies for each of the five presentation stages.

2
Five Presentation Stages

BY NOW YOU'VE DESIGNED YOUR PRESENTATION AND ARE READY TO take your good work to the stage. At this point, you need to consider a range of technical tips for carrying out each of the five stages of presentation—before the opening, during the opening, throughout the body of the presentation, during the closing, and after the close.

Before the Opening

The best presenters typically arrive early to complete final preparations for their performances. It's not unusual to see the most skilled speakers in a room a full hour before their presentation. Taking care of last-minute details helps presenters feel more confident and frees their mental energies to focus on what's important—the audience—once the session begins. Before the opening, good presenters are sure to attend to three areas: (1) the comfort and perspective of the audience, (2) the ambiance and utility of the presentation environment, and (3) the workspace for the presentation.

The following is a compilation of tips we have learned from experienced presenters about getting ready right before a presentation.

Prepare for the Audience

• Walk around the room and observe what participants will be able to see from various seats. Sit. Imagine a head in front of you. Note how much of the projection screen or easel can be seen over that head. (Usually this is only the top two-thirds of the screen.) Put masking tape on the sides

of overhead projectors and easels to indicate visibility zones.

• Make a final check on refreshment arrangements. In the morning, fresh brewed caffeinated and decaffeinated coffee, fruit juice, hot water, tea, and chocolate drink packets are sound basics. Provide cold drinks in the afternoon.

• Establish a registration area with handouts, sign-in sheets (if required), and a greeter to welcome people and answer questions. Provide preprinted name tags or instruct participants to complete name tags with felt-tip pens so that first names can be read from at least twelve feet away.

• Plan to complete all before-the-opening preparations 30 minutes before your opening so you can be relaxed and personally greet participants; learn about their interests, concerns, and experiences; and let them know something about you.

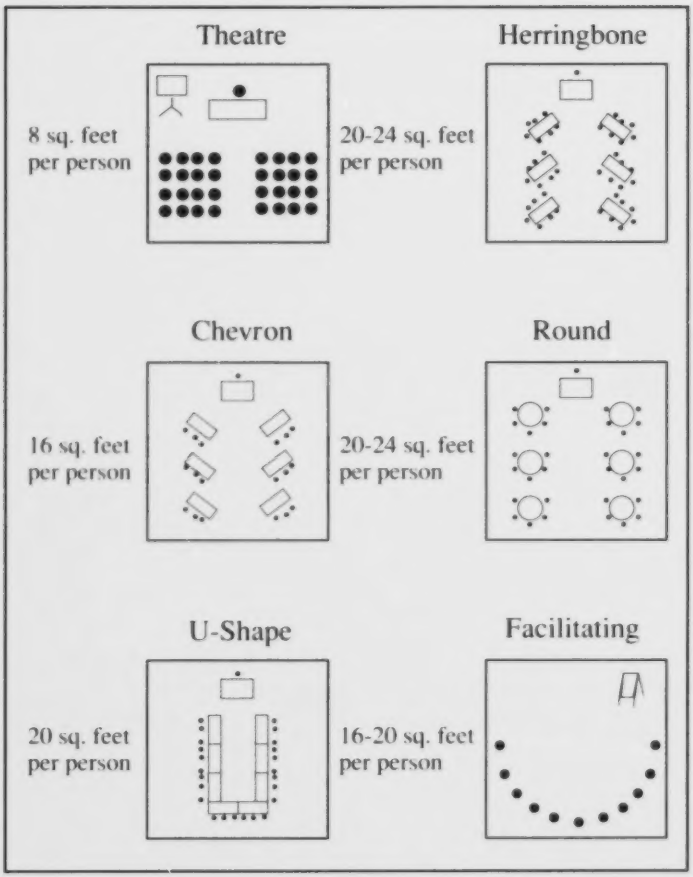
Prepare the Learning Environment

• Before-the-opening music can set a welcoming tone and invite relaxation. Music affects the emotions, respiratory system, heart rate, brain waves, posture, mental images, and overall learning capacity of your audience. The rhythms of the body synchronize to the beat of the music. Baroque music at 60 beats per minute is often associated with programs of accelerated learning (Ostrander, Schroeder, and Ostrander 1979). For imagery and relaxation, consider new age artists such as Steven Halpren, Georgia Kelly, George Winston, and the classic Cannon in D by Johann Pachebal. We especially like to use the music of Vivaldi and Torelli.[1]

• Decide which seating arrangement best fits the room and your learning objectives (Smith 1984) (see Figure 2.1).

[1]To comply with U.S. copyright law, you will need to file a Music Usage Report with the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) or Broadcast Music, Incorporated (BMI) each time you use live or recorded music in a public presentation. For information, contact ASCAP at One Lincoln Plaza, New York, NY 10023 (telephone: 212-621-6000) or BMI at 200 Schultz Drive, Red Bank, NY 07701 (telephone: 1-800-NOW-4BMI). Or call the United States Copyright Office hotline at 202-707-9100.

Figure 2.1
Room Arrangment



Theater style offers the greatest number of seats in the smallest space but the lack of tables makes interaction difficult. Consider this for groups over 50. *Classroom style* adds tables and decreases space. It promotes presenter-audience discussion but inhibits group discussion. Consider this arrangement for groups of 30 to 50. An alternative to classroom style for groups of 30-150 participants is to have tables angled so participants seated on both sides have their shoulders pointing toward the speaker. This allows for lecture style learning *and* small-group discussions between people at the same or different tables. In **U-Shaped** seating for groups of 15 to 30, participants can easily see each other, which promotes group dynamics. The source of authority is focused in the open end of the U. **Circled chairs** or tables that form a rectangle signal shared authority. This is workable in groups up to 16.

• Warm the stage by using props to create a visual focus and an aesthetically pleasant stage environment. Presenters' props include the platform, easels, screens, stools, and chairs. Arrange them to define (and put boundaries on) the presentation area. Use colorful graphics that welcome people, present the name of the session, and display a public agenda.

• Decide what your position should be in the room to give the majority of the audience the best visual access to you at the opening. Plan to be there and stand still (so they can get a good look at you) for the first few minutes.

• Test the overhead projector. The two most common problems are poor focus and burnt-out bulbs. Be sure you have a spare bulb, or, better yet, a spare projector.

• Check for ambient lighting when using an overhead. Close the drapes, turn off banks of lights, or reposition the screen if necessary to cut glare. Write notes to yourself on the cardboard overhead frames.

• Check the sound system.

• If your face is going to be projected on large screens in an auditorium while you speak, prepare the room by preparing your face beforehand. If you're introducing someone, you may not be there long enough to get past your nervousness, so over-memorize your introduction. Then, when you're at the podium, look into the bright lights behind the camera where the audience is, and smile. Raise

your eyebrows. Those big screens magnify all tense expressions, note reading, and loss of presence with the audience.

Prepare Your Workspace

This final step is about establishing routines for a number of logistical considerations so that during the presentation your precious and limited mental space can be reserved for monitoring the audience's interaction with the content.

- Make final notes to yourself on your private agenda. Mark times in the margin to help you monitor and make adjustments during your presentation.
- Stick strips of masking tape on the easel along the side of the flipchart for quick paper hanging during the session.
- Designate a space for pens, spare tape, blank overheads, and so on. Always return items there. This is particularly important if you are presenting with a partner.
- Use *only* water-based, felt tip pens. They do not bleed through chart paper or make permanent marks on clothing, walls, or your skin. Use bright colors.
- Arrange two sets of transparencies. In one stack, place transparencies in the sequence in which you will use them. Spreading the second, supplementary set out on a table will allow you to respond to the unique needs of the audience. Make your transparencies bold, colorful, and simple.
- If your session is going to be audiotaped, do a dry run to practice describing each visual you use so the listening audience can derive maximum meaning.
- Organize the entire presentation workspace. Remove briefcases, extra handouts, *everything* you don't need immediately at hand to present your material. This eliminates visual distraction for the audience and mental distraction for you.
- Finally, place your private agenda at your fingertips so you can unobtrusively refer to it at any time to keep you on course.

Openings

You have enormous potential to create magic during the first few moments of your presentation. Recall the musical energy broadcast in the showpiece tune, "Another Opening, Another Show."

You transmit that type of energy when you bound up to the stage, face and voice in full animation, focused on being useful to the audience, and filled with positive assumptions about them and the session that has just begun.

All audiences come with these three questions. Who are you? What is the topic? How does this topic relate to me? These questions should be answered as straightforwardly and as early as possible.

While answering these questions, there are several things that you can do from the very beginning of your presentation to help you achieve four important opening outcomes: establishing focus, building audience rapport, energizing for learning, and setting norms. Your work on each of these outcomes will influence the others and provide you with opportunities to arouse interest and jump start the audience's minds to a full-alert condition. Here are several proven approaches.

Startling Statements

Get a statistic or a piece of data related to your topic that startles people or provokes questions in their minds. For example: "I don't have much time with you today; in fact, I only have enough time to annoy you and that's what I intend to do. My annoyance is intended to irritate you much like the grain of sand that irritates the oyster and you know what happens to that. The oyster develops a pearl."

Enrollment Questions

An enrollment question is any question you ask an audience that causes them to respond to you. Enrollment questions create focus, arouse interest, and immediately begin to set the norms of participation. For instance: "How many of you would like to discover some answers to the problems of classroom management?" "How many of you would like to learn some new techniques that produce results in students' scientific thinking?"

A Yale University study (Jensen 1988) declared that the most powerful words in the English language are those "that affect us most directly." They include: *you, easy, love, free, save, discover, health, success, proven, guaranteed, results,* and *new*. They are powerful because everyone is concerned about health, safety, relationships, and security. Jensen notes that to those words you can add *how, how to, announcing, now, I wonder if, most, greatest, best, why, who, when, where,* and *what*. Jensen recommends incorporating these "power words" into your openings and enrollment questions.

Anecdotes

Focus the audience with a *brief* story that relates directly to the topic of the day. A good story puts audiences in a receptive state, which is an excellent beginning for a learning session.

Dissonance

Energize and focus your session with something that causes audience members to be troubled about something or that leads them to engage in problem-solving thinking. For example:

> John Goodlad (1984) reports in his extensive research on American schooling that the further students progress in school, the fewer instructional strategies they are exposed to. For example, in the primary grades they might be exposed to eight or nine, but by the time they reach high school that figure is more typically about three; most frequently the lecture and reading a text and doing something with the reading. Now, turn to your neighbor and talk about two questions: (1) Why do you think this might be the case? and (2) What might we as staff developers do about it?

Ask Participants About Their Concerns

At the beginning of innovations people are generally concerned first about themselves. Skillful presenters may capture this energy by asking the question, "About this topic, what are your concerns?" Small groups can then

discuss the questions and report out. The presenter listens, perhaps recording what is said on a chart. The presenters' response behaviors are primarily nonjudgmental, reflective, and inquiring. This is a great diagnostic opening from which you can shape your presentation.

Relate to the Audience

If you are introducing yourself, quickly relate your own work to the audience members' roles. If you're speaking to principals and you are or have been a principal, mention that. If you are speaking to high school teachers and you have not been a high school teacher, reference the high school teachers that you have learned from, observed, or presented to in the past.

Self-Disclosure

A quick phrase to let people know who you are beyond your presentation role is useful in narrowing the typical distance between presenter and audience. For example, "I'm an empty nester" or "When I am not out skiing, I spend most of my time in schools" gives audiences a sense of intimacy and personal knowledge about who you are.

Synectic Exercises

For energy, a good opening move is to engage audiences in a discussion such as the following: "Please complete this sentence in trios. Get as many answers as you can within two minutes. 'A presentation is like a gift because . . . .' or 'Teaching is like a fruit salad because. . . .' " This opening serves several purposes. It moves the evaluative energy off you, helping you relax and helping the group become warmer and more friendly with one another; it puts energy in the room; and it is diagnostic for you because you can discover audience tones and moods. We once asked a group of supervisors, "How is a supervisor like a household object?" and heard mostly toilet analogies from the group.

Begin Within Ninety Seconds

Whatever you do during the opening, make sure that it moves quickly with a sense of purpose. Whether you are

describing the session's goals, presenting the agenda for the day (which is critically important because all of the literature on presenting tells us that audiences need to have a feel for the "shape" of the presentation), or starting with a discussion topic, it is useful to use the phrase "And now to begin" to signal that this is part of the agenda and part of the learning, and that the participants are now into the topic.

Audience rapport is essential. During the first few minutes of a presentation, most audience members are hard at work making judgments about the presenter's credibility and the personal benefits of attending the session. Therefore, it is useful for you to stand still at the opening to help participants make judgments . . . but not for too long. While the development of rapport really begins with pre-opening activities such as the one-on-one conversations that allow you to show that you care about and are interested in participants and allow them to get to know you as a person, there are several additional things that you can do to continue to develop that rapport during the formal opening.

Come Prepared

Your organization and preparation communicates to the audience that you value them and their time. Honoring start times and ending times also communicates respect. Giving an overview of the materials you've distributed orients participants to the resources that they have to work with during and after the session.

Communicate Respect

Establish your respect and the collegial nature of your relationship with the group even if you have selected at times to work from the expert's stance described in Chapter 1. Flood the opening air space with positive presuppositions and expressions of your awareness of their high expectations for themselves and you. You can start by saying: "Good morning, it's wonderful to be with you. I know that you're here to add to your existing fund of knowledge and to make this day as profitable as possible for yourself." Sometimes we tell audiences when we are working on the

topic of presentation skills: "Today we enter into a special relationship because we are able to remove the curtain that usually exists between presenter and audience. The topic of our work today is presenting."

It's important that any of the statements that you make be true and genuine. Establishing rapport with your audience will be the single most important thing that you do to encourage learning. It is important at the beginning of the session and throughout, so you must make adjustments whenever you sense rapport slipping. The most powerful catalyst for rapport is your honest concern for your audience.

Establish Credibility

Rapport is also enhanced by managing your introduction to the audience in certain ways. When you introduce yourself, do so briefly, as we described earlier. If someone else is introducing you, we suggest that you write out a brief paragraph from which they can speak. Unplanned introductions can develop relationship problems for an audience. With written introductions it is often useful to include a statement of values. For example: "I'm happy to present Bob Garmston and Bruce Wellman to you today. They are both committed to helping individuals and groups access and utilize the genius within themselves." Presenters also establish opening credibility by displaying confidence and knowledge. Citing (briefly) relevant statistics at the beginning helps communicate such knowledge.

Communicate Caring

Caring can be communicated simply by the way you look at people and through your interest in them during the pre-opening activities. Caring is communicated when you invite people to take responsibility for their own comfort. For example, you might suggest that they get up when they need a cup of coffee or slip out to the bathroom any time during the session. Caring is also communicated through special touches such as providing music or food.

Body

We're discovering several special tips for accelerating learning during the body of our presentations. These tips mainly have to do with helping participants stay clear about what train they are on, where it has been, where it is currently, and where it is heading. Our attention to these areas also enhances recall. Among the specific strategies that we employ are foreshadowing, bridging, backtracking, giving directions, and processing.

Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing not only helps people know where the presentation is going, it also excites them about the journey. Right before lunch, for example, we might say, "When we return from lunch, we will share with you some intriguing research conducted in singles bars that has much to say about the dynamics of rapport."

Bridging

A bridge provides a transition between one content chunk and the next. Jon Saphier at Research For Better Teaching, masterfully bridges by frequently providing schedules in his presentations. For example, Jon might say, "We've just examined strategies teachers use to check whether students are with them or confused. Next, we are going to watch a videotape to see these strategies being used. Then, this afternoon, we will look at the broader picture—what teachers do to *keep* students with them. These activities will help you become a better observer and commentator on these aspects of instructional management." In this example, Jon is linking the previous learning with the present, the present with the future, and all three with the audience's final goals and use of the data.

Backtracking

To backtrack is to frequently review what has occurred in a presentation. To backtrack two or three times during the morning about the morning's work is not by any stretch of the imagination too much. Each backtracking helps

people mentally review where they've been, recall and relate earlier information to current experiences in the workshop, and refresh their memories.

Giving Directions

We are very careful about the directions we give during presentations. To prepare directions for small-group activities, we will frequently write in our notes the specific language we plan to use. This is important because unclear directions can make people feel dumb. Once participants feel dumb, it takes an enormous amount of energy to get them confidently on track again. Any preparation time spent making directions clear, explicit, and elegant pays handsomely. Our goal is minimum words with maximum understanding. Graphics are particularly helpful.

Processing

Simple and effective processing techniques include having participants turn to a neighbor and summarize what has just been said, or asking participants to make eye contact with someone sitting at a different table and stand and discuss with that person the main ideas of the morning. Other processing techniques include providing personal journal writing and reflection time, or trios discussions in trios in which participants might discuss applications of a concept or their concerns. See Chapter 6 for more on this important topic.

Closings

Closings, like openings, should be as powerful and as magical as you can make them because people remember their first impressions and last impressions most vividly. How you close will strongly influence the audience's memories of your presentation.

A successful closing communicates a sense that something was accomplished, that what was accomplished was worthwhile, and that it is complete for now (Jensen 1988).

Accomplishment: Leave participants with a sense that they have enhanced themselves in relation to the day's

topic. Help them feel that they came a long way toward understanding or developing skills in the area in which they were engaged. A brief summary of the session supported by graphic organizers helps to convey this message.

Worthiness: Validate the worth of the content and the audience's work. Validation means that what occurred is approved by participants as worthwhile, enhancing, and real to them. Elicit some of these perceptions from the audience by asking for public reports of personal learnings, insights, or benefits. Or make these connections yourself from what you know of participants' broader agendas and purposes. Also validate that participants are valuable players in the work in which they are engaged, and that they make critical and worthwhile contributions. Tell them so.

Completion: Finally, completion means that this is now another completed reference experience, but participants should be clear about the appropriate next steps in their journey. Tell them what these steps are and foreshadow what they may experience as they engage in next steps.

Here are some strategies for closings we've learned from Frank Koontz of the Bureau of Education and Research in Bellevue, Washington, which is an organization that delivers over 400 days of highly acclaimed training to teachers per year. Frank coaches the educators who present for the Bureau. He suggests that you:

- Plan your closings in detail. Memorize them if necessary.
- Provide a cognitive summary of the day. Support this summary with visuals.
- Provide an affective component.
- Acknowledge the important work and contribution of the audience.
- Include encouragement for next steps.
- Inspire.

Closings that are too long lose energy. Time is precious when people are moving toward their anticipated end time. Frank suggests spending two to four minutes at most on the affective part of the close.

Be especially conscious of your voice and nonverbal messages. At the end of the day your visual connection with

the audience is important. You may wish to be on a riser if that is possible. Poems, quotes, and stories are all useful strategies for the affective close.

Finally, end early. If the announced adjournment time is 3:30 p.m., adjourn at 3:20 or 3:25. You will never make an enemy by adjourning the meeting a bit early. As you close, turn the music back on. It warms the room as people are leaving.

After The Close

If at all possible, schedule your time so that you can be available for 15 to 20 minutes to answer questions and respond to individuals' interests and observations. Plan to be fully available to individuals without needing to worry about cleaning up your workspace or packing.

Participants frequently ask for references or copies of transparencies. We have found that it is best to ask them to send you a self-addressed envelope with their request. This separates the casual requests from the serious ones and simplifies your back-at-home follow-up time.

We've also found it helpful to keep a journal of our learnings during each presentation. We note special insights that we had, what we were pleased about, new techniques that we invented on the spot, what worked, and what did not. These become good reminders for us as we plan future sessions and add to our cumulative power and skill as presenters.

3
Maintaining Confidence

THE QUESTION WE ARE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED ABOUT PRESENTING is, "How do I overcome nervousness and display confidence before a group?" In this chapter we address the reasons for nervousness, its physiological and psychological components, and practical steps you can take to direct nervous energy so you can appear and *be* more confident when presenting.

Sources of Nervousness

Nervousness is a universal phenomenon. Novices and professional performers experience it, even some of the world's most famous presenters. Sir Laurence Olivier, Helen Hayes, Maureen Stapleton, Luciano Pavarotti, Willard Scott, and many others have all freely admitted (and repeatedly overcome) their nervousness and stage fright.

The good news is that nervousness *can* be successfully managed. Because nervousness is a mental phenomenon with physiological results, presenters can achieve desired states of calm by employing mental and physical preparation techniques.

There are six major factors in presentation nervousness: (1) audience size, (2) audience importance, (3) the presenter's familiarity with the audience, (4) the difficulty of the subject, (5) the vulnerability of the presenter's public persona, and (6) the presenter's experience (Turk 1985).

- Larger audiences often seem more intimidating than smaller ones. Yet we have found that groups smaller than fifteen are actually harder to present to than audiences in the 16 to 40 range. In groups of less than fifteen, the

presentation naturally evolves into a series of dialogues with individuals, providing highly personalized and unpredictable interactions.

- The degree of importance the speaker assigns to the audience also affects nervousness. We once worked with a military man who gave regular briefings to the President of the United States. His rehearsals were lengthy and intense, and his nervousness quotient very high.
- The better known the group is to the speaker, the easier it is for the presenter to visualize the event and thereby reduce anxiety.
- If the topic is difficult for the audience to comprehend, or difficult for the speaker to communicate (perhaps this is the speaker's first time presenting new material), the speaker may experience lots of butterflies.
- One factor in nervousness has to do with face. Being overly concerned with how you will look to others guarantees anxious feelings and reduces your resourcefulness. When either of us becomes concerned about looking good, smart, well-informed, or *not* looking clumsy, insensitive to audience norms, or irrelevant, our butterflies mass, take off, and vengefully fly in various directions. Whenever we try, in other words, to be more than we are (expert instead of novice), the risk factor goes up and pulls with it the anxiety level.
- The most anxiety producing of all these factors is lack of experience. Fortunately, as we explain later, it is also the factor you can do the most to correct.

Manifestations of Nervousness

Being observed by others naturally creates a state of "arousal"—a psychological term for "keyed up." Arousal is marked by increased adrenaline flow, higher heart and breathing rates, dilated pupils, and alert and rapid reactions. Believe it or not, all of this is a plus! Arousal helps speakers meet the demands of speaking and has an energizing effect that can improve performance. But too much arousal can create a threshold condition in which improved performance is transformed into a state of deterioration as emotions disrupt the pattern of behavior

(Argyle 1983). It is this overabundance of arousal that we call nervousness. The muscles around the mouth tense up. The speed and pitch of the voice rise. And timing errors occur because the biological perception of time depends on internal biological rhythms that run on adrenaline. Nerves also affect the way speakers think and influence language production, often resulting in mental blocks, ambiguity, and confusion of meaning. And nerves are manifested throughout the whole body, giving speakers sweaty hands, dry mouths, wobbly knees, and for some, headaches and upset stomachs.

A basic signal of nervousness is a speaker's inability to stand still when talking. "When a person is emotionally aroused, he produces diffuse, apparently pointless, bodily movements" (Turk 1985, p. 109). An anxious person tends to talk faster than normal and at a higher pitch. In addition, nervousness is communicated to audiences beyond their conscious perception. This happens when the speaker's voice subliminally communicates stress. According to Turk (1985) all voice patterns include an individual and unique level of micro-tremor (similar in many ways to fingerprints). When someone becomes stressed, there is a marked drop in the frequency of micro-tremors, which is registered unconsciously by listeners.

Stress not only impairs the presenter's performance, it disturbs audiences, who tend to judge the competence of a speaker based on the presence or absence of stress signals. Remember that audience members see from *their* perspectives (I'm sitting in a chair and can't possibly be frightening to the speaker). Related to this egocentric perspective, and because of the human need to make meaning of all unclear communications, the audience often interprets nervousness as, "the presenter doesn't know what he's talking about." The audience may also become overly concerned for the presenter. In either case, the effectiveness of the presentation is lost when audience energies are diverted away from the speaker's purpose.

Fifteen Ways to Reduce Nervousness

Presenters can reduce their nervousness with mental and physical techniques. Because the body and mind are

connected, treatment to one affects the other. What follows are fifteen proven techniques for reducing nervousness, eight are physical techniques, seven mental. We invite you to browse this list and develop a personal program that best suits you.

Physical Techniques

1. Breathe. This is the simplest and possibly most effective relaxation technique. Just before you begin to talk, take three deep breaths. They should be full and slow, all the way down, filling the lungs. Concentrate on your breathing. Think of nothing else. Just three good, deep breaths are enough. They add oxygen to the system, distract your attention from fear, and help clear your mind.

2. Progressive relaxation. Tense and relax your body, one part at a time. For example, first tense the toes and then relax them. Then tense your feet and relax them, then your ankles, and so on.

3. Walk. Athletes walk and stretch before performances, which warms not only the muscles but the psyche. Walking vigorously just prior to your presentation burns adrenaline, gets oxygen into your body, and relaxes your large muscles.

4. Uncross your legs. If you are sitting on a platform waiting to speak, crossed legs can sometimes shut off the blood circulation causing great embarrassment when you stand and discover that you only have one leg working. Uncrossed legs keep blood freely flowing to both sides of the body and to the brain.

5. Dangle your arms. Again, when waiting for your turn at the podium, let your shoulders droop, dangle your arms, and imagine that you feel a heavy overcoat on your shoulders. Most people experience stress and tension in their neck and shoulders. Feeling the overcoat reminds you to relax.

6. Twist your wrists. From either a standing or a seated position, twist your wrists and shake your fingers out to remove tension and increase energy flow.

7. Make faces. Wiggle your jaw. Exercise your eyebrows. Flare your nostrils. Experiment with the elasticity of your face. Comedian Billy Crystal is said to exercise like this for as long as 30 minutes prior to giving a performance.

Of course, if someone sees you in the corner making funny faces just before you go on, you may lose a bit of credibility!

8. Center yourself physically. Stand. Allow both arms to drop naturally to your sides. Have your feet spread so that they are appropriately balanced beneath you. Allow your spine to lengthen, and mentally reach toward your hair and pull a strand of it up so that your neck is elongated and your spine comfortably stretched. From this position, imagine that you are pushing both feet into the floor, then release. Your body will let you know when you have that centered feeling from which your presentation can best take place.

Mental Techniques

As we discussed earlier, the greatest stress producer is lack of experience. Fortunately, the next three strategies can help you overcome this.

9. Overprepare. All butterfly prevention starts with planning. Be very clear and particular about your opening. If this is a special occasion and you are feeling some extra nervousness, memorize the first seven minutes so that you can deliver these lines even if your mental space closes down.

10. Written notes. Write down what you plan to say. Rewrite it and simplify it. You may even want to mind map it. Rewrite it again. Continue to write it, organize it, and list it until it is in a very succinct form with each idea that you have written on the paper automatically triggering in your mind the set of ideas that you want to present on that section.

11. Mentally rehearse. Our estimate is that rich mental rehearsal along with the first two mental techniques will alleviate 80 percent of most presenters' nervousness. Much has been written on the topic of mental rehearsal.

From the athletic community we are learning about the valuable benefits of envisioning—seeing pictures, hearing internal sounds, accessing feelings. Rich envisioning creates in the mind what is known as the Carpenter effect. This causes nerves, muscles, and the entire body to behave as if it has experienced an actual practice. This technique has been successfully employed in team sports such as hockey and football and individual sports such as diving and track,

and with peak performers in management settings (Garfield 1986). Fortunately, the technique also works in the more complex interactive areas such as teaching, facilitating, and presenting.

There are three keys to good mental imagery: (1) creating rich (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) internal representations, (2) making adjustments until the internal representatives feel right, and (3) making the representations from your perspective and that of the audience.

Mental rehearsal might go something like this: Imagine yourself preparing to present a topic to a group. Close your eyes. Take three deep breaths. See yourself in the room. Notice the way your body is organized in space. If you are standing, notice your posture. Notice where your feet are on the floor in relationship to your shoulders. Notice the attitude of your hands and the expression on your face. From an audience's perspective, what is your face saying? Where are your eyebrows? Raised? Lowered? What degree of animation? What does the audience hear? Notice the pitch and the rhythm of your voice. Notice the patterns of your speech. Notice the amount of floor space that you are using, your gestures, your walk, how you handle the overheads. Now step into your own body in that picture and sense what it feels like. Make any necessary adjustments so that you feel comfortable. Keep watching the audience and your own performance and continue making the adjustments until you feel ready to begin.

Mental rehearsal does not take long. It's possible to rerun a rehearsal film making adjustments several times. Each time you run the film, your body responds as if you had actually been there. What had been unfamiliar, becomes familiar. What becomes familiar is predictable. What is predictable lacks anxiety-producing elements.

A caution about mental rehearsal. Sometimes we can unintentionally rehearse our anxiety and actually increase what we don't want. Not long ago, one of us was on a plane heading for a presentation that he anticipated would be difficult. On the airplane he kept daydreaming about everything that could go wrong. He finally caught himself doing this and, realizing that the pictures we create are the pictures we tend to achieve, he deliberately spent the next

few minutes seeing new images of himself relaxed and the audience laughing (with him not at him). When he arrived at his destination, he found the difficult situation that he had anticipated. But the positive pictures he had imagined on the plane were the ones that played out during the actual performance.

12. Reconnaissance. Examine the room itself. Convert the unknown into the known. Make sure logistics are arranged to your liking and see the space you'll be working in from the audience's perspective.

13. Take the long view. Fear exaggerates any imagined threat. Ask yourself the question, "How important will this presentation be to me five years from now?"

14. Paradoxical intervention. If you discover that no matter what you do, you are still having extreme cases of nervousness, you might try using paradoxical intervention and tell yourself not to relax. In this approach, you prescribe to yourself exactly what you are trying to avoid. Try to get as nervous as possible. Imagine the audience being hostile, throwing things at you, and saying rude things to you. Most often, the harder you try to get tense, the more you will get tickled instead and not be scared. This is a last resort approach offered by Turk (1985), and it helps some people to relax despite themselves.

15. Prayer or mantra. Many people find prayer or mantra useful ways of locating the inner calm within. Many people have discovered that prayer can be a powerful, practical source of strength at tense moments in their everyday lives. Some presenters find that prayer the evening before a presentation is calming and centering, particularly if it is focused on serving the audience, not serving oneself.

How to Achieve the Physiology of High-Performance States

There is a physiological component to any high-performance state. That is, when you're at your best, your body is organized in some consistent and predictable ways. Think back to a time when you have felt supreme confidence. You have been fluent, capable, and resourceful. Think about how your body was organized in space. In your

memory, check your posture, use of hands, face, and the attitude of your head and neck. Where were your shoulders? Now, take a moment and *be* like that. Recreate as exactly as possible what your body was doing at that time. As you do, search for the inner sense of confidence you felt. Because body and mind are inextricably interrelated, we can move ourselves psychologically into high-performance states by physically adjusting our bodies to the positions we naturally assume when we are performing well.

Another way of approaching this is to emulate others who perform well. Think of people you know in your immediate environment or television or screen figures you admire. Study their patterns, their voice qualities, what they do with their bodies, their sense of presence or eye contact with others. Isolate some portion of each person's performance that is desirable for you and compatible with your own personality and style. Add that to your own mental rehearsals and consciously experiment to incorporate it in your work.

* * *

Joseph O'Connor is director of the Sports Performance Institute, which develops mental training for athletes. He is also a musician, author, and teacher. Writes O'Connor (1992):

> The feeling we might label as "nerves" in a performance situation is often the same as the feeling we would label as "excitement" in another context. We need that extra energy in testing circumstances, and my experience with performing artists suggests that without it, their performances suffer. So the question becomes: "How to use the energy, excitement, and anticipation to give a better performance rather than let it run rampant and distract you or turn to negative internal dialogue. If there are butterflies in your stomach, how can we persuade them to fly in formation?

4
Knowing Your Audience

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT AUDIENCES ARE MORE THAN A collection of individuals; the moment people are seated within a group they assume a group identity. Often, even the most well-informed audience members give themselves over to a child-adult relationship in which the presenter's job is to entertain and inform, while their's is to accept or reject what is being delivered. Because a presenter's goal is to engage in rich dialogue with an audience, it is important to move the relationship as soon as possible to an adult-adult interaction—and within that to communicate in the most effective ways possible.

Knowing some general facts about audiences can help you set up the relationship you want with them. First, audiences want you to win. Second, they come from extensive and varied backgrounds with diverse interests. And, third, they also bring a range of perceptual filters based on group norms, personal history, and learning styles. Here are some ways to diagnose and work compatibly with the variations you will encounter.

Learning Styles in Action

We now have a rich body of literature describing cognitive and personal style differences (Guild and Garger 1985). To present the following data we have drawn on Jungian types as presented by Hanson, Silver, Strong and Associates (1980) and the ASCD video series, "Teaching Strategies Library" (1986). Readers may also note connections with Gregorc's (1982) work on styles.

People receive and process information in very different ways. Some people prefer to receive information

through concrete approaches with practical hands-on activities and processes they can modify and adapt. Others learn more easily from abstract ideas with well-illuminated theories, quotations, and citations from authorities. Some people come to presentations seeking opportunities for interaction with others and personal involvement. Still others want a well-structured experience with a clear agenda, specifically focused data, and targeted materials and handouts.

People also process information in various ways once it is received. Some people process and structure their internal experiences sequentially, preferring neat, orderly presentations with ideas arranged in hierarchies moving from part to whole. Other people process and store ideas randomly or thematically, finding meaning in workshop experiences and making connections between ideas and events.

Speaking to Four Audiences

Participant questions are one indicator of learning style differences and needs. Here are examples of questions from four different types of audience members.

Scientists: "How do these concepts fit together? Is there a pattern?"

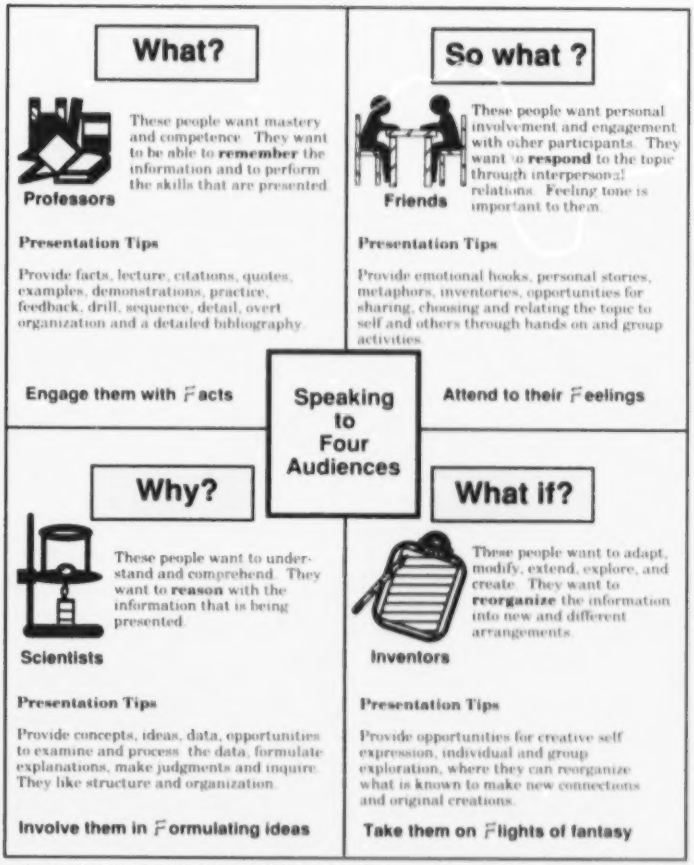
Professors: "What is the source of that quote? Is it listed in the bibliography?"

Friends: "We're not done yet; can we have more time to talk in our groups?"

Inventors: "Given these facts and data, what is the most reasonable option?"

Figure 4.1 shows the four types of audience members and suggests strategies for presenting to each group. Remember, we're all a combination of these types, having some of each style in our personal mix. Which of these styles are most like you? The nature of this mix determines learning preferences and, correspondingly, our own presentation strengths and shortcomings. Knowing about audience styles will help you tailor your presentations to reach a wider audience.

Figure 4.1
Speaking to Four Audiences


What?
So what ?
These people want mastery and competence. They want to be able to **remember** the information and to perform the skills that are presented.
Professors
These people want personal involvement and engagement with other participants. They want to **respond** to the topic through interpersonal relations. Feeling tone is important to them.
Friends
Presentation Tips
Provide facts, lecture, citations, quotes, examples, demonstrations, practice, feedback, drill, sequence, detail, overt organization and a detailed bibliography.
Presentation Tips
Provide emotional hooks, personal stories, metaphors, inventories, opportunities for sharing, choosing and relating the topic to self and others through hands on and group activities.
Engage them with Facts
Speaking to Four Audiences
Attend to their Feelings
Why?
What if?
These people want to understand and comprehend. They want to **reason** with the information that is being presented.
Scientists
These people want to adapt, modify, extend, explore, and create. They want to **reorganize** the information into new and different arrangements.
Inventors
Presentation Tips
Provide concepts, ideas, data, opportunities to examine and process the data, formulate explanations, make judgments and inquire. They like structure and organization.
Presentation Tips
Provide opportunities for creative self expression, individual and group exploration, where they can reorganize what is known to make new connections and original creations.
Involve them in Formulating ideas
Take them on Flights of fantasy

An adaptation of the Thoughtful Education Model developed by Hanson, Silver Strong Associates, Morristown, NJ.

53

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Knowing your own style dominance as well can help you stretch and flex your presentation strategies. One key to presentation success is to examine your presentation content, design, and delivery and match these to the perceived learning needs of audience members.

Balancing Presentations

It is neither feasible nor necessary to monitor every moment of every presentation for style differences. You can use a number of presentation strategies that support differences and help participants of all styles remain open, engaged, and receptive to learning.

1. Post an agenda (especially important to professors and scientists). An agenda lets sequential learners know where you are going. It frames the session and captures the big ideas. The trick here is to not make the agenda overly specific. Keep a "fluffy" public agenda and a detailed private agenda. If the public agenda is too specific you lose flexibility in the presentation and may find it difficult to adjust to meet the group's needs. When you do not cover something on the public agenda, some participants feel a sense of loss and start reevaluating the day. They analyze the segments that should have been left out so the "missing" pieces could have been included. It is useful to post the public agenda where people in the session can see it. Some participants will spot check the agenda throughout the session to gauge progress and monitor time flow.

2. Use verbal and visual advanced organizers (especially important to professors and scientists). At the beginning of the session, verbally annotate the public agenda. Give some detail to the major segments. Repeat this pattern at key transition points in the content and after breaks. This reminds the group where you are going and what is important. Asking provocative questions or sharing startling data also serve as advanced organizers.

Examples:

"Would you like to know a strategy for increasing the length of students' verbal responses by 300 to 700 percent?"

"A recent study reports that the more science courses

students take, the less they like science. In fact, student interest in science decreases from the beginning of a course to its end."

Briefly orient people to materials and handouts. It will save time throughout the session if people know where to look for key components.

3. Foreshadow and Give a Sequence for Events (particularly important to professors and scientists). This is especially valuable before breaks. Foreshadowing creates expectations and serves as a teaser for upcoming segments. It also gives participants a reason to return on time from breaks.

Example:

"Right after the break we will be sharing some cutting-edge brain research and ways to apply it to improving the quality of the questions you ask."

Announce the number of steps or stages you are going to introduce in your presentation. This helps people better hold details in their minds. Transitions and activities also flow more smoothly. If the sequence has more than three steps or the steps are detailed, it is best to provide visual support in the form of a chart or an overhead transparency.

4. Summarize (especially important for friends and professors). At key transitions, summarize your main points and use graphics for added effect. This is a good place to use graphic organizers like venn diagrams and other conceptually oriented graphics that help people make visual connections between big ideas.

Another strategy is to build in meaningful summarizing activities for participants as you move through the session. Structured journal writing is one good way to do this. Providing starter stems for journal pages speeds up the writing process. One flexible form for starter stems is the 3-2-1 format:

3—Things that really interested me are . . .
2—Things I'd like to know more about are. . .
1—Big idea from today is . . .

5. Active Participation (especially important to friends and inventors). Many adults prefer active learning situations where they can engage ideas and interact with others. Small-group processes are very important to these

audience members. Their presentation experience is flavored by the group with whom they sit. The quality of their small-group interaction can determine their feelings about the session as a whole. Simple strategies like "turn to you neighbor and share" help these people stay alert and engaged. This processing time helps participants make personal connections to the ideas at hand and allows them to construct meaning. In Chapter 6, we share a number of specific active learning strategies.

6. Use of Stories (especially important for friends and inventors). Second to dance, storytelling is the oldest teaching device used by human beings. Storytelling communicates to the linear and nonlinear aspects of our brains. Good stories break down barriers to learning and open up pathways to unconscious understanding. When you use stories effectively, your audience enters a calm, almost altered state. There is a childlike quality to a group that is listening to a story. In this state, ideas that might cause resistance in the listener slip past the conscious filters to a deeper part of the brain. Good stories linger in the memory. In fact, we have both had the experience of being greeted by people who have attended our sessions and remember the stories more vividly than any other aspect of the seminar or workshop.[1]

7. Inventories (especially important for friends and inventors). According to Eitington (1984), inventorying "is a technique to facilitate learning via the gathering of data in a systematic or structural way." The key characteristics for effective inventorying are: involvement (everyone plays), realism (data are here and now and about audience members), and introspection (invites reflection about oneself).

For example, the various learning style inventories capture these three characteristics when administered to a group. Knowledge, attitude, and behavior changes can occur when the data from an inventory are processed thoroughly by the group.

[1]Reference materials on storytelling and metaphor are listed in the bibliography.

8. Know Your References and Provide a Detailed Bibliography (especially important to professors). Citing accurate references is a major source of credibility for you. "Professors" and a few of your other participants will be drawn to the details and specifics, wanting to know the source of the authority you are quoting and, in some cases, the methodology used to determine specific findings. If this is not your natural strong suit, it would be a useful area in which to stretch yourself. The first step is to make detailed presentation notes that give you the background detail you need, anticipating likely questions. The bibliography you provide will also support the learning needs of those who are oriented toward facts, data, and research findings. If this is a strength of yours, be careful to monitor audience response to the amount of detail. The presenter's constant query is, "Is this for my needs and interests or the audience's?"

The Language of Offense

Language is an important medium of exchange between presenters and participants. Though language is not the only form of communication you will use as a presenter, your language choices and the examples you use enhance or inhibit learning. If you are not careful, you can inadvertently set up barriers between yourself and your audience.

For example, using jargon or technical terms unknown to audience members can sometimes make the audience feel dumb, creating resistance or hostility. Talking down to audiences has the same consequence. If you oversimplify or use inappropriate examples, you either set yourself apart from the group or imply a superior position.

We talk to teach, yet when we carelessly offend, we teach what we do not intend. Remarks that include stereotypes about gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, or region have this effect. For example, if a speaker were to make jokes while in San Diego about Southern California "La La" land and imply that crazy people live there, it would show tremendous disregard for the fact that these people live and work in San Diego. The

audience might laugh, but underneath they may be hurt. Likewise, commenting on the perceived resistance of older people to new ideas distances a presenter from many audience members and causes them to go inside and engage in internal dialogue and examine their feelings. They emotionally "leave" the session. And when the feelings go, the mind goes too.

There are three important implications about unintentionally abusive comments.

1. Any slight of any subgroup diminishes us all. If an audience member knows you can laugh at "them," by inference he knows you can laugh at him as well. Each group—liberal, fundamentalist, gay, teacher, union officer, Hispanic, Asian, African American, Caucasian—has a group history and language that is meaningful to its members. The individual members of each group have a personal history that compellingly contributes well-formed and well-intentioned points of view, values, and perceptions. To be disrespectful of the experiences from which other people derive meaning and behavior devalues who we all are, who we might become, and how we learn.

2. Stereotyping groups weakens the understanding between people and expands the human and cultural isolation between us. It also gets in the way of resolving the many problems in our complex world.

3. Just as four-letter words are guaranteed to offend some audience members, comments that put down one sex, race, or group are guaranteed to break the momentum, attention, and learning of participants who directly and indirectly identify with the subgroups mentioned.

Preassessing Audience Attitudes, Interests, and Outside Forces

The true success of any presentation is measured by the audience's reaction to it and their interaction with the ideas presented. Know your audience and connect to their needs and they will remember you and your presentation.

By preassessing several important factors, we can tailor the material and the delivery to the needs and desires of the audience members. The most effective way to do this

is to interview the presentation sponsor and one or two potential participants. This can be done in person or over the phone. As you conduct the interview, be sure to activate all your radar. Listen carefully. Are the people you are talking to representing an accurate picture of the group to which you will be presenting or describing their own personal interests?

Knowing some basic data about the audience allows you to design for their interests, speak within their cultural perceptions, and avoid unintentionally offending them. Here are some questions to ask:

1. What does this group need and want to know?
2. What are their major concerns related to this topic and this session?
3. What are the best and worst things that can happen in the session?
4. Is there anything going on in the organization or work culture that I should know about?
5. What is the audience expecting?
6. Is attendance voluntary or mandatory?
7. How many people will be attending?
8. Is the room setting conducive to learning based on the group size and planned activities?
9. What is the age, gender, racial, and ethnic distribution of the group?
10. What are their cultural and religious orientations?
11. Is there any local jargon I should know about and include or avoid?
12. What is the context of the presentation? Is it part of a greater effort or a stand-alone session?
13. What activities will precede or follow this presentation?
14. How can I exceed expectations? What value-added component can be included that will set this presentation apart from all others?

Assessing as You Present

Using elegant presentation plans and state-of-the-art graphic materials to full advantage requires maintaining in-the-moment focus and audience rapport. Keeping your

outcomes firmly in mind at all times and placing *all* of your mental energy on your relationship with the audience is paramount. Skilled presenters constantly assess their audiences. They monitor several vital areas as the session progresses. These areas are:

1. Macro Maps. How are we doing on the three vital macro maps described in Chapter 1?

A. *Four Audiences*: Am I communicating effectively with four different audiences? Have I given enough detail and accurate references? Is there enough small-group interaction? Are there sufficient opportunities to organize and integrate the learning? Are people making new connections and extending ideas for their own purposes?

B. *Intervention Level*: Have I chosen the most appropriate intervention level or levels, or is the level I'm aiming for too high or too low? Will participants alter or develop their behaviors, capabilities, values, or identities based on our work thus far?

C. *Empowerment*: Is the group feeling empowered? Has their level of efficacy increased? Do they feel in control? Do they feel they have choices?

2. Resourcefulness and Rapport. Is the group feeling resourceful? Are group members suggesting useful content additions? Are people offering suggestions for modifications in the seminar or presentation structure that will enhance their learning? Do they pitch in and move furniture and help with snacks or other logistics? How is our rapport? Are the smiles and nods appropriate and genuine? Is the banter friendly and connected to the flow of the session?

3. Participant Learning. Ongoing assessment is as important in a presentation setting as it is in the classroom. There are several questions you can ask yourself to ensure that you assess learning while you are presenting.

A. *Checking for understanding*: Am I checking for understanding? What meaning do I make from participant questions and comments? Are they getting what I want them to get? Do comments during small-group activities show that people are on track or off track?

B. *Embedded Assessment*: What activities can I embed into the presentation that will show me the connections

people are making to and with the content? Can I provide time for participants to crystalize their learning by developing a metaphor, logo, or symbol for some key idea I have presented.

C. *Individual and Small-Group Questions*: At major transition points, build in time for people alone or in groups to generate questions about the content thus far. These can be charted and posted. Important questions can be handled on the spot and others can be incorporated into later parts of the session.

4. The Content/Process Ratio. Is the content and process balance appropriate for this group? Do they need more or less processing time? Do they need personal processing time? Has there been enough content? Are people on overload? Do I need to switch presentation formats?

5. Participant Energy Level and Physical Cues. How is the energy level in the room? Is it too high or too low? What kind of change of pace would be appropriate here? How efficient are the transitions in and out of small-group activities? Are participants engaged and responsive to the material being presented? What kinds of people clusters and energies are present during the breaks?

6. Group Development. Is the large group developing a sense of wholeness? Is there a group identity here that can be defined? Are small groups on task and behaving appropriately?

7. Change Process. Where are we in the change process? Are the issues and concerns being expressed at the level of personal impact or have we progressed to higher levels of refinement and collaboration. Figure 4.2 contains a list of "in-flight assessments" questions you will want to keep in mind as you make your presentation.

Making Adjustments in the Presentation

Making a skillful presentation is like sailing a boat—both require constant adjustments by the captain and crew. Paying attention to the course is vital. Your chart

Figure 4.2
In-Flight Assessments

- Am I reaching all four audiences?
- Am I intervening at the best levels?
- Am I helping the group be empowered?
- Are they resourceful?
- Do we have a good rapport?
- Are they understanding my message?
- Are they making deep connections?
- What new questions are they posing?
- Do I have the right content/process ratio?
- How is the energy level?
- Are participants fully engaged?
- Is the group developing a sense of community?
- At what levels of concern are they in the change process?

and compass tell you the proper heading to follow. Sometimes you sail downwind. Your sails are full and you steer a straight course. At other times you need to haul the sails in tightly and tack smartly into the wind. You zig and zag your way toward the destination with passengers and crew appropriately stationed for safety and efficiency. Just as boat captains, with the permission of all aboard, must command the boat properly, good presenters seek and give themselves permission to make necessary adjustments in their presentation voyages.

To achieve flexibility, ask the group's permission to do so. You can do this by stating your broad goals early in the

session and then noting that you will be monitoring the group and making adjustments to better match their learning needs as the session progresses.

When in doubt about adjustments, stop and ask participants for advice or suggestions about the best directions to follow. You can present several options and ask for a show of hands or give small groups time to confer about the alternatives before they respond.

The final word here is to remember that the person with the most flexibility has the most influence. If you focus too heavily on one aspect of your presentation—be it your content, activities, or presentation design—you can lose sight of your true outcomes and lose the group in the process.

5
Communicating with the Entire Brain

A mind that is stretched to a new idea never returns to its original dimension.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

"Yeast is a wondrous thing. Biologically, it's a simple unicellular fungi. Commercially, we find it in small packets on the grocery store shelf. We take the packets home and put them in a cold refrigerator, waiting for an appropriate time to use the contents. In their shiny foil-lined pouches, the little cells lay dormant. But when we assemble the proper ingredients, combine and massage them in the appropriate fashion, and place the results in a warm environment, a sublime event occurs—fresh bread; a delight to the eye, the nose, and the tongue enveloping us with golden brown, warm-to-the-touch, steaming aromas of fresh baked grains and memories. Yeast by itself does not make bread. Mixing and kneading flour and water does not make bread. Breadmaking requires correct materials, proper conditions, and well-timed procedures. As we examine the task before us today, we need to consider the materials, conditions, and procedures that will help us get the results we want."

AS THE PRESENTER TELLS THE STORY ABOUT THE WONDERS ABOUT making bread, audience members visibly relax. Various parts of their brains go to work. Eyes observe the storyteller's physical movements and gestures. Auditory processing centers take in the tone, pitch, and rhythm of the speech. Other auditory centers process the meaning of the words themselves. Images of yeast packets, breadmaking scenes, and steaming fresh bread dance

across mental movie screens. And long-term memory centers activate remembrances of baking experiences and the smells of distant bakeries.

Communication is a full-body, whole-brain activity. As a presenter, you communicate using your total self. Your message is received nonverbally and verbally, consciously and unconsciously.

On average, adults place far more meaning on nonverbal cues than on verbal cues to construct meaning in communications. A recent summary of much of the communication literature has provided statistical support for the claim that nearly two-thirds of the meaning in any social situation is derived from nonverbal cues, leaving the remaining 35 percent to be accounted for by verbal information.

Unfortunately, the erroneous estimate that 93 percent of all meaning in a social situation comes from nonverbals and 7 percent from language has found its way into almost every popular article about nonverbal communication (Burgoon et al. 1989). This claim is based on extrapolation from two studies (Mehrabian 1981) and, while it has been useful in focusing attention on the importance of nonverbals, we feel it appropriate to correct this misconception with the educational community.

In essence, you, the presenter, are the message. The verbal content of your presentation, the words themselves, are meaningless unless the rest of your body is synchronized. Your eyes, facial expressions, physical movements, vocal pitch, volume, tone, and intensity convey much about you. Your commitment to your topic, the humor you use, and your verbal and nonverbal responses to audience members transmit your values and passions. Your audience members receive these signals and make conscious and unconscious judgments about you as a person, what you stand for, and what your true message is. The total package you present determines how others feel about you and how they respond to your message (Ailes 1988).

Human beings are remarkably sensitive to the hidden messages embedded in communication patterns. Babad, Berniri, and Rosenthal (1991) studied the ways teachers conveyed their expectations about student performance capabilities. In their research, five groups of judges—4th

graders, 7th graders, 10th graders, teachers-in-training, and experienced teachers—viewed ten-second video clips of teachers *talking to* or *talking about* two students from their classrooms. In each case, one was a good student with high classroom performance and one a weak student with low classroom performance. The students could not be seen or heard in the tape clips. Judges were asked to rate the student's scholastic excellence and the teacher's love for the student.

All groups of judges easily identified the level of student performance and the degree of the teacher's love for each student. When *talking about* students, detection of academic performance and the teacher's love was made through speech cues. The researchers hypothesize that when talking about students who were not present, teachers were not cautious when choosing their words. In *talking to* students, where it seemed teachers were careful to control their speech, teacher's love was detected primarily from the video images on the screen. Even with the sound off, judges could accurately rate this dimension in less than ten seconds of viewing.

If nine-year-olds can so speedily judge a teacher's love for an unseen student, adult audiences will have no difficulty determining if you care about them and about the topic you are presenting.

Congruent Communications

Congruence is a state of agreement and harmony. "Congruence means that all your parts, your subpersonalities, are working in a unified way to achieve your objective. When you are congruent in your communication, all your subpersonalities are aligned with your outcome" (Laborde 1988). Your body is an analog for what is going on inside of you. If you are feeling tense and nervous, muscles tighten, expressions sour, and gestures are stilted. When your words say one thing and all the other signals you send say something else, people do not believe you. It is like being confronted by a barking dog that is wagging its tail. You're not sure which end to believe.

It's easier to talk about an absence of congruence than about its presence. The stereotype of a used-car salesman is

an example of this. The gestures and tone of personal interest and concern often do not match the confident words about the quality automobile he is trying to sell. Richard Nixon often displayed a lack of congruence between his words and gestures. During a certain period of his development, in a typical speech Nixon would verbally extol three key points and after a lag of several seconds his arm would dramatically sweep into the air, hand and three fingers outstretched to emphasize the trio of ideas. It was like watching a movie in which the sound track was out of sync with the picture.

Audiences focus on several physical characteristics that determine a presenter's congruence with the message being conveyed.

Body Posture

Congruent communication begins with the overall message your body sends to the audience. Bodies talk. Posture, movement, gestures, eye contact, and vocal quality are interdependent parts of your complete message. Rigid posture leads to stiffness in movement, compression of gestures, and vocal tightness.

Many people approach the act of presenting with fear locked into their bodies. Frank Pierce Jones (1976) calls this locked-in tension the "startle pattern." In one of his experiments, Jones asked a group of 1,000 people to stand in their most comfortable posture. He then made a sudden noise. In every case, the reaction was the same: neck muscles tightened, breath was held, and major body joints contracted. Jones observed that most people operate permanently in a modified version of the "startle pattern." As you present, this can all happen below your conscious awareness, but the audience is very conscious of it.

The task then is to increase your awareness of your own body. Begin by momentarily scanning your body right now. Notice which way your body tilts and which muscles feel stiff or tight. Notice the position of your arms and legs and how your feet rest on the floor. Pay special attention to your neck and shoulder muscles. Consciously relax them and observe the difference.

We carry an amazing amount of tension in our bodies. Increased awareness is the first step toward reducing this

load. Throughout your next presentation, do a periodic scan of muscle tension to find out where you are trapping energy. Then, in your mind's eye, take the audience's view and watch yourself in action. At the end of the presentation, notice which muscles hurt. While observing yourself in a mirror, tighten those muscles to see the message you project to your audience.

Gestures

Gestures have their own vocabulary. They communicate in the oldest language known to man. Effective presentation gestures are spontaneous and authentic and most are symmetrical.

When we are communicating congruently, our gestures match the language we use. Visual words (look, see, observe) are connected to rising arm motions and hands at or above shoulder level. Kinesthetic words (feel, grab, handle) are usually matched by lower movements and gestures below shoulder height. Auditory words (hear, listen, speak) trigger gestures that fall in between visual and kinesthetic motions (Lankton 1980). To understand what we mean, try the following: With your hands over your head, try exclaiming "It was a gut churning moment when the raft went over the waterfall!" Note how awkward this feels. That feeling is the result of a lack of congruence between your words and your gestures.

A useful way to enhance your gestural vocabulary is to pay attention to the gestures you naturally use. Videotape your next presentation and view it without the sound. Notice the way you carry and use your arms and hands. Freeze frames when key gestures occur. Check to see if you physically understate or overstate your points. Flapping arms and waving hands can be distracting. There is a difference between being a dynamic speaker and being a human windmill. To extend your repertoire of gesticulations, observe presenters and performers that you admire. Note effective gestures and borrow them.

The size of your gesture should match the size of the audience and the presentation space. With larger groups and spaces you can and often should use larger gestures. Like a rock band playing in an arena, subtlety is lost on

people seated in the back rows. Most large gestures look awkward though in smaller spaces with smaller groups. Here the atmosphere is more like a coffeehouse performance with the patrons in the front rows as part of the show.

As you plan your next presentation, think about appropriate motions that will match key phrases. The following are some phrases to try out. Create a context for each phrase and make an appropriate gesture to go with it.

- We have a small problem to handle today.
- On the one hand _____, on the other hand _____.
- I have four key points to make.
- This is a bottom-up process.
- Listen carefully to this next section.
- It was a touching moment when . . .
- As we look to the future . . .

Distraction Patterns

Hand movements can add grace and artistry to your presentations or be a major source of distraction, especially when you are holding something other than notes. Hands have a way of straying and fiddling with objects when we don't pay attention to them. It is important that you become aware of any distraction patterns you might have and break these habits. At the next presentation you give, have a friend watch your gestures and unconscious habits and give you feedback on your patterns. Or videotape the presentation and observe for yourself. Here are some common distractors to watch for and avoid:

- rubbing hands or fingers
- twisting rings
- winding fingers in hair or flipping hair back
- stroking your mustache or beard
- twirling or chewing on eyeglasses
- tapping or twirling pens and pencils
- jingling coins or keys in your pocket (take them out before you present)
- jangling jewelry or pulling on earrings
- standing with your ankles crossed (this looks very defensive)
- rocking back on your high heels

• standing behind a podium or table with your hands grasping the edge

Experienced public speaker Ron Hoff (1988) advises that presenters:

> Stand in front of a full-length mirror (arms dangling naturally at your sides) with a large book in each hand. Then talk. At times, you'll raise one hand or the other in a gesture even though the books are heavy. Those are the real gestures. Save them. Eliminate all others. Those are nervous gestures.
>
> You'll also discover that the books will tell you exactly how your hands should be positioned—bent slightly at the biggest knuckle—comfortably close to your body—not moving except when there's an important point to be made.
>
> Then, when you get up to speak—visualize yourself in the mirror with the books. Concentrate on it. You'll find that your hands stay where they belong—and you won't twirl, twiddle, or shake again.

Clothing

The clothing you wear to a presentation is the first form of nonverbal communication your audience gets from you. What you wear and how you wear it tells the audience about your perceptions of yourself and them. Your wardrobe makes comments about your self-image, taste, values, and personality. With one quick scan, the audience judges whether you are conservative or brash, sloppy or neat, one of them or an outsider.

The basic rule of thumb is to dress one notch up from your audience. Audiences see this as a sign of respect. After all, they have to sit and look at you throughout the program. Subtlety and good taste usually work best. Willie Nelson looks great in a headband, but this may not be the fashion statement you should make at your next school board presentation. French cuffs and a three-piece suit won't work well at an afterschool workshop with primary teachers. Excessive jewelry and other fashion accessories can overpower the presentation if you are not careful. The same is true for highcut hemlines and lowcut necklines.

Another basic rule is to dress for comfort and function. Women add to their repertoire of stances by having jacket

or skirt pockets into which they can rest their hands. Both men and women are advised to dress in such a way that they can remove articles of clothing to achieve more informal stances if they have overdressed for an audience. In the end, you want the audience to remember your content and the learning experience, not your outfit.

Voice

Your speaking voice is your most basic presentation tool. The sound and rhythm of your voice frame your personality as a presenter. When you are "on stage," the influence of your voice is greater than normal. You need to pay attention to the impact your voice has on the audience. Tape your presentations (yes, you really sound like that) and analyze the following key vocal factors (Anderson 1989):

Quality. This is your distinctive vocal signature—think of the voices of Martin Luther King or Debra Winger. Vocal quality is determined by pitch (the note or cluster of notes on a musical scale where most of your speech falls), range (the entire span of musical notes your voice can produce), loudness (a combination of two different factors, volume and projection), rate (the speed at which you talk), and articulation (the clarity and correctness of pronunciation). Of these, speakers have the least control over pitch with more immediate control over range, loudness, rate, and articulation.

Range. Your total range is much wider than your normal speaking voice. Staying within a narrow vocal range creates a monotone voice. Expressive speakers vary the pitch of their voices using their full range for variety and interest.

Loudness. A voice with low volume and good projection will be heard far better than a voice with high volume and poor projection. Volume is the amount of air you emit by widening your throat. Projection is the amount of push behind that air.

Yelling is not the same as projecting. Good projection requires the effective use of your total vocal system—diaphragm, lungs, chest, throat, and mouth. A shallow push of air from the upper half of the lungs will result in poor projection. This is why actors and vocalists

spend so much time on breathing exercises. Good vocal projection starts with a full and deep breath, followed by a steady inward and upward muscular contraction rising from the diaphragm. This supplies the push for a smooth and strong exhalation that carries your voice to the far reaches of the seminar room.

Just as variety in pitch adds color and texture to your voice, variety in loudness increases your presentation power. Skilled speakers avoid extremes. They are neither too loud nor too quiet.

Rate. This is often one of a speaker's most distinctive vocal characteristics. It is also one of the biggest problems for the audience. If you speak too quickly, your words run together and are difficult to decipher. If you speak too slowly, you lose your audience members as they fill in the gaps and pauses with their own thoughts or spend all their energy trying to guess your next words.

Find a rate that seems comfortable to you, then tape record yourself and listen to the playback with an outsider's ear. Remember that when you are nervous, your rate of speech will increase. Like other vocal characteristics, strive for variety in your speech rate. Changing the rate is a way to signal the audience that you are about to emphasize a key point or make a transition.

Articulation. Speech is articulated by tightening and loosening the vocal cords and the shaping and movement of the mouth, lips, and tongue around the teeth. Subtle changes in these areas change a "b" into a "p." The quality of your articulation is like the legibility of your handwriting.

A relaxed and natural voice is a presenter's best friend. Fatigue, tension, smoking, and overuse strain voices. Before the start of a presentation, be sure your body is not tense. Pay special attention to your upper body. Relax your shoulders and neck muscles. Warm your voice up by chatting with participants. This eases your voice and helps you make friends so you are no longer presenting to strangers. It also reduces your nervousness, which further relaxes your voice.

Ask someone in the back of the room to be your vocal monitor. Their job is to signal if they have difficulty hearing you. Test your system by deliberately speaking softly during the first half-hour. Use their feedback to calibrate the degree

of projection needed to reach the back corners of the room. You now know the amount of vocal energy you will need to expend. Straining your voice uses energy and will exhaust you.

Face

The eighty muscles of the face are capable of making more than 7,000 different facial expressions (Jordan 1986). Your repertoire of squints, frowns, and smiles is an important part of the presentation package that is you. The faces you see in the audience are often mirror images of the face audience members are looking at. If they are frowning, you are probably frowning at them. Muscular tension shows easily in the face. Flexibility and variety in expressions add artistry and warmth to your performance. Like a good mime, facial expressions convey emotions and meaning. When you are watching yourself on videotape, observe your expressions. Turn the sound off to see the true messages you are sending.

Space

The stage is your presentation space. With limited props, you set the scene. Your props include the chart stand, overhead projector, projection screen, a table, a stool, and sometimes a microphone stand.

Spatial Anchoring. Like an actor on a stage, your use of space and the territory you define shapes the message you convey. Defining special regions in your presentation territory is called "spatial anchoring." You can anchor emotions and memory hooks to places in the room. An example of this is to use a specific spot in the room to tell stories. With repeated use, the audience will slip into a listening posture when you step into the storytelling spot.

Specific spaces in the room can be anchored to specific ideas as well. In Cognitive Coaching Seminars(sm) we tell a story about a bear in a cage. The story is a metaphor about entrenched habits and rigid ways of thinking. In the story, the bear paces and growls within a defined area. This area in the seminar room becomes an anchor we can trigger when we hear participants staying stuck in old ways of thinking. By physically moving into "the bear's cage" we

remind people that they are still using old thinking patterns.

People other than you can set anchors in the room as well. While conducting a seminar, we were once interrupted by the group's director who had just returned from an emergency meeting. She proceeded to inform the group that because of the budget situation, they might not have jobs the next year. Needless to say, for the rest of the day, we did not stand in the spot from which she delivered that message.

Visual Paragraph. Another form of spatial use is a visual paragraph. You create a visual paragraph when marking transitions within stories or content segments. Establish a physical starting point as you begin speaking. At each transition, gracefully move to a new spot and continue speaking. When accompanied by effective pauses and vocal variety, the visual paragraph adds impact and power to your presentation.

Helping Audiences Make Pictures for Learning

One of your tasks as a presenter is to activate the knowledge, skills, and experiences of audience members. Participants bring information to your sessions in mental "pictures." The richest of these "pictures" contain sounds, feelings, and even smells.

As Lewis and Pucelik (1982, pp. 31-32) describe this, there are five primary ways humans experience the world. Barring neurological damage, we can see, feel, hear, smell, and taste. Each one of these sensory inputs has physical places in our brains to which experiences are sent, processed, and recorded. Assimilation of the initial input transforms an experience into something different from the original stimulus. What we actually perceive are representations or models of what each of our sensory organs transmits to us. These individual models of assimilation are called representational systems.

Physiologically, our brains are wired for visual, kinesthetic, auditory, and olfactory processing. For presentation purposes, olfactory processing is usually not important. (It is interesting though that when we are unhappy with our performance we say that it "stinks.") We

all have a blend and preferences for these visual, kinesthetic, and auditory representational systems. We are also each dominant in one or two or more of these systems.

As presenters, this becomes important because human brains develop generalizations from very little data. Generalizations are a form of pattern recognition. Our brains are wired to seek, create, store, and recognize patterns. As a presenter, your task is to provide multiple forms of input by deliberately evoking different representational systems. This helps audience participants construct the richest possible learning.

For example, the story about yeast at the beginning of this chapter uses sensory-rich language. The storyteller gestures dramatically, miming opening the yeast packet, kneading the dough, and inhaling the smells of the fresh bread. The visual images and aromas triggered by this vignette engage the brain and call forth other times and places for audience members. The breadmaking metaphor also indirectly tells participants to pay attention to important aspects of the presentation they are about to hear.

This story models "artful vagueness." The listeners fill in their own images. The sights, sounds, and smells come from within their own brains. In this way they own the learning and make their own meaning (Garmston 1992, Gordon 1978). Through stories, simulations, data sharing, and structured processing, the presenter becomes a facilitator of participants' meaning making.

Presentation Visuals

Strong visuals add tremendous impact to your sessions. Good graphics greatly support the learning process for many participants. On average, only 20 percent of an audience has auditory-processing strengths. This means that most people will remember the imagery you use more than your words.

The primary purpose of visuals is to support and emphasize the main points of your content. It is easy to be seduced into thinking you are a profound speaker when you see participants madly writing down what you are saying. During small-group activities, sneak a look at their notes. If

you are confronted with verbatim copies of your charts and transparencies, you need to realize that audience members were probably not listening to what you were saying. If the visual content is important, give your audience a copy of the graphics just as they appear on the screen or chart stand. Then while you talk, people can fill in the ideas on paper as you elaborate them verbally.

Here are some tips for creating effective visuals:

Keep them simple. Whether using flipcharts or transparencies, don't cram too much content onto each page. Use short, bulleted phrases instead of complete sentences. A good rule of thumb is the 6 x 6 or 6 x 9 rule. For horizontal graphics, use six words maximum per line, six lines maximum per page. For vertical graphics, six words per line, no more than nine lines per page.

Balance overall space keeping the image in the top two-thirds of the page or screen. This allows people sitting in the back to see the entire image.

Use borders. Borders define the image and focus the viewers' eyes.

Use large print. Make the print and graphic elements large enough to be seen by all participants. With computer-generated text this means using type fonts 18 points and larger. On flipcharts, use one-inch or larger letters.

Use uppercase and lowercase letters. Words made up of all uppercase letters are difficult to read. It is much easier to scan typical uppercase and lowercase text. When we first learned to read, our minds imprinted the pattern of ascending and descending letters that make up common words and phonetic segments.

Use icons and ideograms because they communicate concepts more effectively than words. Study the way graphics are used in advertisements for ideas about this and develop your own graphic language (Sibbit 1991).

Use color. For charts, use red and black for headlines. Use earth tones—blue, green, and brown—for body copy. Using alternating lines of colored text makes separation of ideas easier from a distance. Yellow works best as an accent color. Red circles filled in with yellow make visually effective bullets for important items. With computer-generated graphics, it is now easy (but relatively expensive) to make

color transparencies. One good way to add color to black-and-white transparencies is to use outline or shadow fonts and shade in letters.

Use charts when you have big ideas that you want to keep present in the room for reference. These also become anchors for future sessions with this audience.

Using Humor

Humor is a delicate commodity. Effective presentation humor is not the same as doing stand-up comedy. Notice that we are not including an appendix of all-purpose presentation jokes and stories with this book. Canned jokes and ersatz anecdotes don't work for most people. If you're naturally funny and it serves your presentation outcomes, use this strength. If you're the type that can never remember a punchline, do not force the issue.

Allow the natural humor in the setting to bubble forth. When this occurs, it is a true learning resource. Humor releases endorphines in the limbic portions of the brain. These morphine-like chemicals relax the body and open the brain to receive new ideas.

Running jokes within a session help build a sense of community. These can emerge from many sources. The best are often innocent. During a workshop series we once conducted, each of us accidently spilled coffee on the same woman. She was a good sport about it and in subsequent sessions she avoided us with mock horror when she saw cups in our hands. This coffee event captures the essence of effective workshop humor. We were the butt of the joke. Humor like this builds credibility and rapport with your audience. You become part of the group and can be teased and bantered with. This draws participants into the game and takes you off a pedestal.

There is a great difference between native humor and tourist jokes. Effective humor shows you know your audience and can relate to their culture. You are not putting them down or making them the butt of your jokes.

Communication Is Intention

We end this chapter with a reminder that true communication is fueled by your deepest intentions.

Knowing who you are and what learnings you want to create for your audience should drive you toward your presentation outcomes. The sincerity of your purposes ultimately shines through. Our goal here is provide you with personal learning tools so that the goodness of your intentions will radiate throughout the presentation room.

6
Making Learning Active

KEEPING PARTICIPANTS' BRAINS ALERT AND FOCUSED IS AN IMPORTANT part of presenting. Because participants have little conscious control over their attention spans during a presentation (Turk 1985), presenters need to be aware of possible lapses of attention and have a repertoire of attention-focusing methods to draw from. For instance, skilled presenters learn to continually vary their rate of speech, the volume of their voice, and the types of activities used to engage audiences in reflection and knowledge integration, because repetitive stimuli tend to automatically switch off participants' attention.

Small-group activities (involving two or more persons) are a basic building block for interactive presentation strategies that help participants attend, focus, and construct meaning from experiences. Small-group processes have a number of advantages:

- They provide for the relatively easy and certain involvement of everyone.
- They permit and encourage meaningful participation in a low-risk, threat-free way.
- They provide participants an opportunity to learn from peers and to test out the validity of their own ideas.
- They can provide the diversity of views essential for good problem solving.

Setting Norms for Audience Participation

During the first few minutes of a session, accomplished presenters shape audience expectations and establish working norms with the group. One goal during these opening moments is to "secure permission" to actively

engage participants in the learning process. Another goal is to establish control of the energy flow in the room so you can move into and out of activities smoothly to maximize learning opportunities. Both these goals can be accomplished by getting the audience to respond to some question by raising their hands. Role surveys are a classic way to do this. You can simply ask participants questions like these:

- "How many of you teach at the primary level?"
- "How many of you teach at the secondary level?"
- "Who has K-12 responsibilities?"

Demonstrating confidence is important when you are securing permission and trying to gain control. You demonstrate confidence in the way you give directions. For instance, asking audience members to turn and meet their neighbors is a simple request, yet the activity helps group members bond and allows you to model how you will direct activities and regain audience attention as you bring the one-minute conversations to a close.

Such routines done early in the presentation help you establish your attention signal. This is easy when working with a microphone. A simple request and a confident pause will usually suffice. We both carry melodic three-note chimes that we use to signal the close of small-group activities and a return to whole-group processes. The chimes act as an "auditory anchor."

Another strategy is to establish a "zero noise" signal. Here a raised hand signals participants to bring their conversations to a close. When participants spot the presenter's raised hand, they too raise their hands to signal others in the room. Groups both large and small quickly come to attention. It is important to explain the rationale for this and other such strategies. Most adult learners respond well to these techniques when the purposes for using them are clear.

Strategies for Unifying the Whole Group

Audiences need help becoming a group. Shared interests are not always enough to bond the individual members. Collective action and whole-group, shared

activity add excitement and a collaborative quality to your presentations. Here are several strategies for building whole-group cohesiveness.

Call and Response

Unison response through simple chants or patterned replies creates a team spirit in the room. Giving audiences a simple phrase to answer a set of rhetorical questions is one way to do this. Here is an example:

Presenter: "How do we solve the problems in today's schools?"

Audience: "Teamwork!"

Presenter: "How do we find extra energy and ideas?"

Audience: "Teamwork!"

Presenter: "How do we support learners and their families?"

Audience: "Teamwork!"

Adirondack Rainstorm

Groups sometimes appreciate help refocusing after a break. Skilled presenters develop a repertoire of strategies for getting a group back on task. One way to do this is to engage the group in some collective action. The Adirondack Rainstorm is an old camp counselor routine that serves this purpose nicely. Begin by asking if anyone noticed the rainstorm that passed in the night. Then describe the storm in stages. Invite audience members to help you tell the story by mimicking your actions.

1. Gently rub your palms together as you describe the wind in the trees.
2. Tap two fingers in the palm of your hand as you describe the first drops of rain.
3. Clap your hands faster and faster and louder and louder as you describe the increasing showers.
4. Slap your hands on your thighs as the storm builds and builds.
5. Stomp your feet as the storm reaches its peak of fury.
6. Reverse order as the storm winds down, repeating the appropriate motions and sounds.

Your audience is now with you and ready for the next activity. They have reconnected as an audience and are once again ready to learn.

My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean

This is another activity from the camp counselor's bag of tricks. This is used to focus a group and to energize participants. We set this up by explaining that auditory acuity is an important learning tool. (Say all of this with a straight face.) Have participants arrange their chairs so they can easily stand. Invite them to join you in singing "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean." Have participants alternately stand or sit whenever a "b" sound occurs. Be sure to caution people with weak knees or backs to take care and do what they need to for safety. After you have gone through the song once at a moderate pace, you can speed things up and get everyone popping up and down.

Stories

Storytelling may be the most bonding activity of all. A repertoire of presentation stories is a gift to your audiences. Matching an appropriate story to the occasion is part of the presenter's art. Story ideas are all around you. We suggest carrying a small notebook to jot them down as they come to you. This notebook will be helpful when you need to develop a story for a specific audience.

Establishing Working Groups or Clusters

Using Changing Groups

In long and short sessions, purposeful small-group activities add variety and energy to your presentation. Attention to the room and seating arrangements is an important first step in this process. Seating often defines the nature of a small group. The table and chair arrangement sends a message about what type of session people can expect. Four chairs around a small table sends a different signal than chairs in a row facing a podium.

Group size is important. When table groups get too large, some members are excluded from the interaction. It is

usually best to subdivide large table groups into working groups of three or four. Pairs are the most problematic grouping configuration. If one member of the pair does not have his energy focused on the task or presentation, he can easily distract the other. Larger groupings avoid this problem by spreading the energy and interaction to more people and possibilities.

There are no hard and fast rules for deciding how long to keep small groups together. It depends on many variables related to both your overall purpose and the nature of the large group. Changes in small-group composition can be used to add physical movement and energy to your sessions. Clarity about your outcomes for the session should guide your grouping strategies. If you plan to switch groups during the session, signal your intentions in advance. This mentally prepares participants for the transitions. Some people enjoy the switches and others resist them. Your attitude and your explanations for the regrouping make a major difference in participants' responses. Sometimes the best practice is to establish home teams, regroup for specific activities, and then return to home teams.

Here are some strategies for mixing large groups and establishing new working subgroups:

1. High Fives. Participants stand and raise their right hand to signal others that they are seeking partners. When the specified number of participants join together, they drop their hands and find a place to work together. Some participants will quickly form groups. Less assertive participants will often need a boost. Establish a formal area in the room where people seeking partners can meet. If you notice many groups that haven't yet figured out a strategy for getting the right number of people, you may need to facilitate regrouping to speed up the process.

High fives give the audience a degree of control over group formation. It requires a small amount of risk taking. If mixing of the large group is an overarching goal, you can encourage people to seek partners with whom they have not yet worked or partners they do not know.

2. Playing Cards. This works with groups of up to fifty-two. Shuffle a deck of cards and distribute them to

participants. People then find others in the room holding the same card as themselves: The 2's become a group, the kings become a group, and so on. If you want groups of three, simply remove one of each card from the deck.

You can use color-coded cards instead of playing cards if you prefer. Be careful not to use shades of color that are difficult to distinguish from one another.

3. Nursery Rhyme Humming. In this delightful strategy, each participant is handed a slip of paper with the title of a common nursery rhyme or folk tune. Make duplicate slips for the number you desire in each working group. You should model the list of tunes so people know what to listen for. After the slips are distributed, have everyone begin humming the tune they were assigned. Have participants move around the room listening for others humming the same tune. When they find a match, pairs hum in unison to attract others humming their tune. Teams stop humming when the required number are together. This allows others who have not yet joined their groups to narrow their search. Here are some tunes that work:

- "Pop Goes the Weasel"
- "Mary Had a Little Lamb"
- "London Bridge Is Falling Down"
- "Rock-a-Bye Baby"
- "The Farmer in the Dell"
- "Old MacDonald Had a Farm"
- "Frere Jacque" ("Are You Sleeping, Brother John?")

4. Line-ups. Getting the whole group up out of their chairs and into a line adds energy and delight to a session. There are many different ways to form lines.

- Birthday Line-ups: Participants are instructed to stand and line up in order of their birthdates (month and year) without talking. They may use hand signals to indicate their birthdates and to direct one another into position.
- Arm length. Participants line up in order of arm length measured from shoulder to fingertips. Length of fingernails is included in the total measurement.
- Elaborate shoes. Before you start, develop a working definition of the word *elaborate*. It should not be the same as *expensive*. Participants then line up in order of the elaborateness of their shoes—from most to least elaborate.

This can be done with or without talking.

- Length of time in present position. Participants line up in order of the length of time they have held their current positions. Any change in title, grade level, school assignment, and so on is a change in position.
- Eye color. Participants line up by eye shade, from darkest to lightest. Subtle differences matter here. People will need to look closely at one another's eyes to determine exact shadings.
- House numbers. Participants line up in order of their house, street, or post office box numbers. This too can be done with or without talking.

When the whole group is in a line, you can subdivide the line into smaller working groups. One way is to walk down the line clustering people who are now standing next to each other. Another is to have the group count off into the number of groups you desire by dividing the total group number by the number you want in each group and having participants count off by the result. For example if there are 36 people in the room and you want to establish groups of 4, have the large group count off by 9. The 1's become a group of 4, the 2's become a group, and so on.

Selecting Recorders

Once groups are established, the next task is to select recorders. This is another opportunity to be playful and to introduce a light note into the day. One way to do this is to *not* announce your intention and simply have the members of each working cluster learn one another's names and find out who traveled the furthest to reach the session. Ask for a show of hands of the far travelers. When these folks respond, tell them each to grab a pencil, as they have just become the recorder for the next activity.

If you will be doing a number of activities that require a recorder, establish a clockwise or counterclockwise rotation from the first recorder. Then with each new activity, the recording task shifts.

There are many other ways to select recorders. In general, the more playful the better. In each of the examples below, the person that best meets the description becomes the recorder.

- most buttons
- most different colors in clothing
- highest house number
- most pets
- longest time in current position
- shortest time in current position
- got up the earliest
- got up the latest
- wearing the most jewelry
- cutest thumb (participants compare and select the cutest thumb among themselves)

Getting Group Reports

Having small groups report out is another presentation challenge. If the total group is large, you will not have time for all small groups to share after every activity. One way to control the reporting is to announce that you will hear from a set number of groups. Four to six reports is usually about the limit. If more than six groups report, the large group loses energy and time is wasted. At each reporting opportunity, encourage groups that haven't yet shared to volunteer first. You may need to roam with your microphone so people can hear one another.

Giving Directions

Clear directions are essential for a quality learning experience for participants. If directions have many steps or are in any way complicated, use a chart or overhead transparency to explain the task and the time frames. These directions can be displayed throughout the activity. Scripting and honing direction giving is well worth your preparation time and effort. It increases efficiency, preserves your energy, and contributes to easier and better participant learning.

Establishing Time Limits

Tight time limits for activities keep small groups on task and focused. It is usually better to cut activities off than to let them run too long. A watch with a built-in stopwatch is a great monitoring tool. During long

presentations, as fatigue sets in, it is easy to lose track of time. You also can get sidetracked by participant questions during small-group activities and lose the large group along the way.

Active Learning Strategies for Short Presentations (One Hour or Less)

During short presentations, you can create several opportunities for interaction between small groups and between you and the whole group. We have used several successful interaction strategies.

- **Neighbors.** Say to participants:
  "Turn to your neighbor and . . .
  —Reflect on what I just said.
  —Identify the key points from the last few minutes.
  —Generate practical examples of ideas presented so far.
  —Share a time when you've encountered examples of these ideas.
  —Share any concerns you have regarding this topic.
  —Decide which of the options I listed is the best and why."

This strategy can be varied by having people turn to the person behind them or using some other specific pattern.

- **Learning Partners.** Direct the audience to make eye contact with someone across the room. Pause long enough for this to happen, then tell people to stand with this "learning partner" and share their opinions and responses to the presentation thus far.
- **One-Sentence Summaries.** Have audience members individually write one-sentence summaries of the session or of a specific portion of the session. Then have neighbors share and compare their summaries.
- **List of Concerns.** Have participants generate a personal list of concerns regarding the topic and then share and compare with a neighbor.
- **Paired-Verbal-Fluency.** This strategy can be used to activate thinking about a topic or provide an opportunity for summarization at any point in the presentation. The steps are as follows:

1. Establish partners. Have each team decide who will be person #1 and who will be person #2.

2. Assign the topic, which each partner will discuss in turn. Partners listen carefully to each other. During their own turn, they cannot repeat anything said by the other person.

3. When you say "Go," partner #1 begins. After the selected time elapses, you say "Switch," and person #2 takes over.

Three to four rounds are usually sufficient. The time for each partner usually should not exceed forty-five seconds. Decreasing the time for each round keeps the energy high. We usually use three rounds of forty-five seconds, thirty seconds, and twenty seconds. At the end of the paired verbal activity, you may wish to allow pairs a few more minutes for true conversation about the topic at hand.

- **Standing Voting.** To surface a range of opinions on a topic, ask audience members to stand in response to selected actions, options, or positions. An example might be: "How many of you think that the main reason for the lowered dropout rate is changing demographics?" All who agree with this idea stand to register their votes.
- **Value Voting.** Participants register the strength of their support or feelings for a subject by raising one to five fingers, with five fingers indicating strongest support.
- **Just Like Me.** This strategy is often used at the beginning of a session, but it can be used any time you sense the group needs energy. The presenter gives a series of stems or questions. If the content of a stem applies to an audience member, they energetically stand, raise their arms, and exclaim "JUST LIKE ME!" The stems and questions can be tailored to the content of the presentation. Here are some generic examples:
  - *I was born in this state.*
  - *I was born west (east) of the Mississippi River.*
  - *I like to travel.*
  - *I love chocolate.*
  - *I speak more than ten words of a foreign language.*
  - *I've read a good novel in the last month.*
  - *I've traveled outside the country in the last five years.*
  - *I've been thinking about this topic for some time.*
  - *This topic is new to me.*

This strategy can be combined with the learning partners strategy. In that case, participants should watch for someone who stands up for one of the same stems as they do. At the end of all the "Just Like Me" stems people find learning partners for the session and return to their seats. Later in the session, you can direct people to reconnect with their learning partner to explore some idea in the presentation.

• **5-3-1.** This is a summary device for individuals and small groups. First, individuals generate five key words that capture for them important aspects of the presentation. They then share these with a neighbor or small group. The working cluster then selects three key words from among all the words offered. When this is done, the list is pared to one key word or big idea that subsumes the three key words. The directions for this are best laid out one step at time so participants explore each stage thoroughly before going on to the next step.

• **3-2-1.** This is another summarization device that can be used with individuals or small groups. On a chart or overhead transparency, the presenter vertically lists the 3-2-1 stems, which the participants expand on. The stems are flexible and can be tailored to each presentation. For example:

3- big ideas from today's presentation
2- points to ponder
1- action to take immediately

• **Synectics and Four-Box Synectics**. Synectics is a metaphorical strategy for developing insights into a topic. It is an excellent way to open or close a session. In its simplest form, you ask audience members to form clusters, select a recorder, and generate responses to a metaphorical question. For example:

"Peer coaching is like what sport or outdoor activity? Why?

How is developing student thinking skills like sailing a boat? Why?

How is school culture like yogurt? Why?"

Four-box synectics is more elaborate and takes a bit more time. Draw a four-box grid on a chart or overhead transparency. Small-group recorders do the same on a full

sheet of paper. Elicit examples of everyday objects from the group and label the boxes as the ideas are given. For example, boxes might be labeled toaster, chair, pencil, and vase. You then assign the topic at hand, which will be compared to each object. Small groups should generate four to six ideas in each box. They then select their one or two greatest hits to report out to the whole group.

Besides using everyday objects to label the boxes, you can use foods, fruits, vegetables, animals, sports, hobbies, occupations, or any other theme.

• **ABC Summary.** Teams list the alphabet and generate a word or short phrase related to the presentation that begins with each letter.

• **The First Word—The Last Word.** This is a variation on traditional acronyms. The strategy can be used to kick off or wind-up a session. Select a key concept or topic from your presentation. Write the word vertically down the side of a chart or overhead transparency and ask the recorder in each small group to do the same. Teams then generate a word or short phrase pertaining to the topic at hand that begins with each letter of the vertical word. Push groups to include all major ideas within the letter framework. This may take some linguistic gymnastics. Sentences do not have to be grammatically correct. You're after big ideas here. Here's an example:

T- ogether we create more than each alone
E- nergy increases with commitment
A- lways another way to think about something
M- embers responsible for themselves and for the team
W- orks well with knowledge of self and others
O- pposites don't always attract
R- elaxed atmosphere comes from shared humor
K- nowledge of strategies is important

• **10-2.** This is a wait-time strategy developed by Mary Budd Rowe (1983). In the 10-2 structure, the presenter lectures or presents material for ten minutes then stops for two minutes. During this pause, participant pairs or teams share their notes, fill in gaps in their own notes, and help each other clarify concepts. Usually, questions may not be addressed to the presenter during these pauses. Unresolved questions and issues are saved for the last five minutes of

the session. The time structures can be adapted, of course, depending on group dynamics and the complexity of the material being presented.

Active Learning Strategies for Longer Presentations

Lengthier sessions require a greater repertoire of interactive strategies. The same strategies used for shorter sessions also work well in lengthier sessions. But given a longer time frame, there are even more techniques you can use to make learning active.

• **Walk-Around Survey.** Hand each participant a sheet of paper with a three-by-three grid on it. The first row is labeled *Recall*, the second row is labeled *Observations*, the third row is labeled *Insights*. Each of the nine slots in the grid has a place for a name. After giving the group the time frame for the activity, you signal them to get up and move about the room collecting *Recalls*, *Observations*, and *Insights* from people in the room. Participants may collect only one idea from each person, and each person should sign her name next to her idea in the appropriate slot on the recording form. At the end of the allotted time, have everyone return to their home teams to compare notes. Table groups can then be asked to form generalizations about the large group. This activity works well as an opener during the second, third, or fourth day of a multi-day session.

• **Swap Meet.** This is an active and energizing opening strategy. To set up the swap meet, form home teams of four to six members. Have each team generate examples of concrete ideas, techniques, strategies, and principles related to the topic at hand. These are now the trade goods that the team has to swap for other good ideas in the room. This is a barter economy. Everyone must give an idea to get an idea. On your signal, the swapping begins. Swappers should carry a pen and paper on which to take notes. They should also record the source of the idea so they can get back to a person for any needed details.

After the allotted time (8 to 12 minutes), have participants return to their home teams to share their

treasures. Using this techniques, everyone in the room is able to collect a number of practical and personally useable ideas in a short period of time.

• **Carousel Brainstorming.** This strategy gives a physical energy boost to the session. Place large sheets of newsprint or chart paper, each with a different question or topic related to the subject under consideration, at various points around the room. Divide the group into teams of four to six participants and give each team a different colored marking pen. Have each team choose a recorder and a facilitator. Then have teams quickly brainstorm responses to the question or topic listed on their sheet of paper and ask the recorder to write down their ideas on the paper.

After two to three minutes, signal the teams to rotate one position to the right or left. The markers travel with the teams. The color coding of ideas builds in accountability and lets you track each group's progress around the room.

At each rotation, groups read over what is already on the sheets of paper and add ideas of their own. The rotations continue until each group has contributed to every chart. Teams then return to their original chart to review items there. They place a question mark next to any items they are not sure belong there. If time permits, teams can also categorize the items on their original chart and report out to the whole group.

• **Semantic Maps and Mind Maps.** Semantic mapping is a useful strategy for activating prior knowledge and for assessing participants' knowledge before and after specific segments of training or learning. A major strength of this strategy is that it helps participants construct a model for organizing and integrating the information they are learning. Mind maps are like semantic maps in their overall structure with the addition of hierarchical color coding and the use of strong graphic elements and icons.

To set up semantic maps, select a key word or topic as the center point on the map. Give each team a sheet of chart paper on which to create a map. Teams brainstorm words and ideas related to the focal word. They write the words on the map in clusters, labeling the categories as they emerge. Subcategories and related ideas are linked by circles and lines drawn to show relationships between ideas (Heimlich and Pittelman 1986, and Margulies 1991).

• **Circle Maps.** In a circle map, the key idea is written in a circle in the center of the a large sheet of paper. Teams brainstorm related ideas and scatter them around the rest of the page. No attempt is made initially to organize the ideas. After a sufficient amount of time has elapsed for idea generation, teams swap papers and categorize the ideas on the new sheet. This allows teams to compare ideas and to expand their viewpoint on the topic (Hyerle 1990).

• **Sort Cards.** Sort cards or pictures work well where clear relationships exist between concepts or terms. These relationships can be part to whole, whole to part, cause and effect, or any other arrangement that shows connections between the individual items. Each team will need their own set of cards, so some materials preparation is involved. You should type onto the cards any key words, concepts, or interesting tidbits related to the content you are presenting. You could use a word processor to create a master set of cards for reproduction. Teams sort the cards into categories or groups based on the relationships they believe exist between terms. After the cards are sorted, teams create labels for their groupings. Teams can report out the labels for their categories and any significant insights that occurred as they were working.

• **Corners.** Corners are a quick and energizing way to get a group up and moving and to form new groups if needed. Post signs labeled with the names of four different animals, foods, countries, leisure activities, or any other theme in the corners of the room. Give participants time to consider which corner they would most like to go to. At your signal, have participants move to the corner they've selected and as a new subgroup share their reasons for selecting that corner. Then have the subgroups process some question related to the presentation content and develop consensus on their best ideas. A spokesperson can then share the subgroup's ideas with the whole group. If one group is large, you can put up more choices or subdivide the groups that form in the corners (Kagen 1990).

• **Round the Clock Learning Partners.** This is a more elaborate form of the learning partners strategy. In this variation, each participant is given a handout with a large clock face on it. Next to each hour on the clock is a line for a name. When you say go, all the participants get up and mill

about, collecting names for their clocks. Sets of participants record each other's names in the blank clock slots. Participants continue milling until they have a different name in each slot. Later, when the group needs a stretch or when a significant summarization point arrives in your design, you can call out a clock hour and participants can stand and match up with their preassigned partner for that hour.

A firm time limit for the sign-up period quickly moves events along. At the end of the designated time period, check with the group and match up any people with missing partners for a given hour. If there is only one person without a partner for a given time slot, they become a wild card and can join any pair when that time is called.

• **Numbered Heads Together.** Numbered Heads Together is a simple and powerful cooperative structure that draws on small-group interdependence and builds in individual accountability. It has a gamelike quality that is highly motivating. This structure works well for quick reviews and provides a way to easily check participants' understanding of the material being presented. Numbered Heads Together can be used for lower- and higher-order questions. The time allowed will vary, depending on the cognitive complexity of the thinking required by the question you ask. The steps are as follows:

1. Teams number off. Each member of each team has a different number. Teams of four to five work best. If team numbers are not equal, all teams should number off based on the size of the largest team. In this set-up some team members will have two numbers. Teams are numbered as well. People then have a personal number or "head" number and a team number.

2. The presenter poses a question. High-consensus questions usually work best. These are questions drawn from the knowledge or comprehension level of Bloom's taxonomy.

3. Team members put their heads together and collaboratively generate an appropriate answer. Teams need to make sure that every member knows the answer and can speak for the group.

4. You then call a number. Playing cards can be used for this purpose. If there are five people in the team you will

need an Ace, 2, 3, 4, and 5 in your mini-deck. A random card draw adds excitement to the event. When the number is called or selected, all participants with that "head" number stand up.

5. The presenter then randomly selects a team number and the appropriate standing person answers for their group. With a second set of cards corresponding to the number of working groups in the room, you can make this a true random selection.

When the question is answered satisfactorily, everyone sits down, another question is posed to the group at large, and the process is repeated. Everyone's number stays in the game, therefore, it is possible for the same "head" number and table number to be picked more than once (Kagen 1990).

• **Three-Step Interview.** The three-step interview is a cooperative structure that helps participants personalize learning and listen to and appreciate the ideas and thinking of others. By actively listening and paraphrasing, interviewers develop understanding and empathy for interviewees' thinking. This strategy is most often used to help participants make personal connections with the topic being exploring. It works as follows:

1. Participants work in pairs. One is the interviewer and the other is the interviewee. The interviewer listens actively to the comments and thoughts of the interviewee, paraphrasing key points and significant details.

2. Pairs reverse roles and repeat the interview process.

3. Each pair joins another pair, form a group of four. Each person introduces their partner and shares what their partner had to say about the topic at hand (Kagen 1990).

Eliciting and Answering Questions

Audience questions are an important part of any presentation. These can occur at designated points in the program or emerge spontaneously. How you answer questions is a major source of your credibility. The care with which you treat questions also signals your respect and caring for the audience.

There are several different strategies for answering questions. As you tune in to the participant's question,

listen for evidence of the macro maps we first discussed in Chapter 1 by asking yourself the following questions:

1. What is the learning style I'm hearing in this question? Do I need to answer with a research citation, a practical example, or a metaphor?
2. What is the most appropriate intervention level? Should I respond with examples of appropriate behaviors and capabilities or should I respond to values or probe for the questioners' identity. (There is more on these layers in the next chapter.)
3. How do I help empower the questioner and the other audience members? What themes are embedded in this question that I can work with in my answer?

One way to choose a response pattern is to listen to the syntax of the participant's question and respond in kind. This strategy was introduced to us by Communication Development Associates (Weiner 1989). They advise speakers to determine what type of response is appropriate by paying special attention to question syntax to determine what type of question is being asked. There are several types of questions:

1. True/false, yes/no—"Should we change the schedule?"
2. Multiple choice—"hould we buy the equipment now or later?"
3. Short answer—"ow many? How much? When? Who?"
4. Essay—"Why should we change the curriculum?"

Communication Development Associates (CDA) counsels speakers to answer the question in the syntax that matches the way it was asked. For example:

Question: "Should we change the schedule?"

Answer: "Yes. Here are three reasons why."

CDA also advises answering the question in summary form first, and then elaborating on your response. Short answers are more credible than long ones.

Another question-answering pattern is called *feel-felt-found*. This pattern is especially useful when the participant asking the question is highly emotional. When the participant finishes asking the question, pause, and then answer, "Many people feel the way you do about *[this subject]*. I have felt this way, too." Now, take a step as you

say, "And as I've reflected upon this topic more, I have found that _____." You now have room to offer several points for consideration. This response pattern dignifies the questions and offers the participant options from which to choose.

Active learning in well-structured presentations makes your sessions memorable and thought-provoking. In the next chapter we will explore a wider context in which presentations become a vehicle for both personal and organizational development.

7
The Presenter as Social Architect

> Watch two bits of foam flowing side by side at the bottom of a waterfall. What can you guess about how close they were at the top? Nothing. As far as standard physics was concerned, God might just as well have taken all those water molecules under the table and shuffled them personally. The modern study of chaos began with the creeping realization in the 1960s that quite simple mathematical equations could model systems every bit as violent as a waterfall. Tiny differences in input could quickly become overwhelming differences in output—a phenomenon given the name "sensitive dependence of initial conditions." In weather, for example, this translates into what is only half-jokingly known as the Butterfly Effect—the notion that a butterfly stirring the air today in Peking can transform storm systems next month in New York (Gleick 1987, p.8).

LIKE THE ACTION OF A TINY TRIM TAB ON THE RUDDER OF A GIANT ocean liner, very small, often unnoticeable adjustments to a system can turn an organization around (Senge 1990). Senge explains that a trim tab is like a small "rudder on the rudder." Its function is to make it easier to turn the rudder, which then makes it easier to turn the ship. The larger the ship, the more important (and powerful) the trim tab. In this chapter, we explore the potential power of presentations, working in harmony with other forces, to provide steady, consistent leverage to educational organizations, contributing to organizational change and enhancing an organization's capacity to facilitate student learning.

Schools and educational organizations are systems, influenced by the full range of dynamics large and small, distant and close, external and internal, which shape the direction, capacities, and production of those within them. Cognizant of this, the best presenters, those who seek through their work to influence far beyond the moment, take on the mantle of social architect (Garmston 1991), ever so gently applying pressure to the organization's trim tab, releasing the system's Peking butterflies. The effects of the butterflies on the system are inevitable, yet nonlinear and unpredictable. The effects of the pressure on the trim tab, being more mechanical, are more calculable. In systems as complex as schools, there is much room for the unexpected.

The Cumulative Effect of Presentations

We have come to realize that each presentation, whether consciously planned to be or not, is a message about the sponsoring organization's values, goals, expectations, and relationships. In the same way that principals best communicate their values through the way they perform their daily routines—reacting to events, caring for students, and managing the repetitive demands of the job—presentations transmit exceptionally persuasive, informal signals, which are slightly out of conscious awareness, about the norms, values, and expectations of the organization.

What are the trim tabs that, regardless of the seasons, currents, and weather systems, will bring the educational ship home? We propose two: helping students achieve learning (see Appendix B for a draft of the American Psychological Association's list of Twelve Learner-Centered Psychological Principles) and constantly refining the staff's capacity to facilitate their own and students' learning. That is to say, the best presenters envision, enroll others in, and work toward creating schools in the shape of learning organizations. Unfortunately, most schools and universities today cannot be characterized as learning organizations. "Although learning goes on in our schools and universities, it is primarily replicative learning aimed at passing along the intellectual and social agreements of the day to students" (Jaccaci 1989).

A learning culture, according to Jaccaci, is one "where collaborative creativity in all contexts, relationships, and experiences is a basic purpose of the culture. It is a culture where the measure of success is the combined wisdom of groups and the synergy, leadership, and services of the organization as a whole."

How To Develop Learning Organizations

It's clear that the workplace environment influences beliefs, thinking, and practice. What professionals do, says Jack Frymier (1987), is influenced more by the bureaucratic structure of the workplace than by personal abilities, professional training, or previous experiences. Presentations that transform organizations influence the structure of the workplace. They are regular, planned events, and though each may appear to be an isolated experience, together they become a powerful force in the evolution of the group.

Presenters as social architects consider six sound principles for transforming organizations: (1) keep your eye on the big picture, (2) pick the right butterflies and intervention levels, (3) regard your presentations as interventions into a system, (4) frame your presentations according to the bigger picture, (5) be at once intolerant and patient, and (6) become a connoisseur of organizational dynamics.

Keep Your Eye on the Big Picture

The presenter's mission is twofold: to support the staff, and, in doing so, to foster student learning and empower students as learners. This twofold mission is the big picture. Keeping your eye on the big picture is not always easy. One of the presenter's challenges is to avoid getting lost in the soap opera of the day. Periodic crises related to personnel, community dynamics, budget, or curriculum can divert energy and blur the focus.

Pick the Right Butterflies and Intervention Levels

In Chapter 1, we discussed macro maps. Covey (1989) writes that "if we want to make significant, quantum change,

we need to work on our basic paradigms . . . . In the more general sense . . . the way we 'see' the world." An architect starts with a vision. For example, we believe presenters need to keep in mind the following macro maps: "All presentations provide opportunities to pursue the empowerment outcomes of efficacy, personal improvement, and community" and "Rapport, resourcefulness, and accelerated learning are goals in each presentation." These maps are a subtext of the presentation; rarely, if ever, are they overtly executed. Occasionally, however, the presenter may review them while reflecting on the dynamics contributing to participant learning.

Macro maps determine which butterflies our presentations release. For example, consider the following three macro maps:

- All behavior is rational. Each person makes rather simple cognitive maps to explain complex relationships and then acts rationally on the maps.
- All behavior is well-intentioned and represents the best choice a person *is consciously able to make* at the time.
- All perceived reality is a function of the different lenses people wear—for instance, the lenses of gender, age, race, and cognitive style.

What happens when the presenter working with the perspective of a social architect reaffirms these ideas over and over again? What is the message? The message is "You're okay. You're rational and well-intentioned, and you see events through certain personal perspectives." When the audience realizes that the presenter is saying "You're okay," their response is, "This is a community of learners. Let's give, take, explore, and develop together."

As you can see, releasing the right butterflies is important. So, too, is choosing the proper level of intervention. This is why presenters must leverage presentation time by choosing the most powerful levels of intervention. Presenters should always be seeking to direct training energies to the levels that will produce the most growth. At the lowest end of this continuum are presentations that work to change or improve specific behaviors, followed by presentations aimed at altering capabilities, then those aimed at changing beliefs, and

finally, presentations at the highest level of intervention, those that change the audience's identity.

Level 1: Changing Behaviors. Teaching participants how to identify the characteristics of at-risk children, distribute student response opportunities more equitably, become better paraphrasers, and wait after asking students a question are examples of behavioral-level training objectives. Presentation goals at this level are expressed as the attainment of knowledge or skills. They contribute least to transformational growth and modification of the institution.

Level 2: Changing Capabilities. Capabilities are the mental strategies and maps that participants develop to guide their behaviors. These cognitive strategies help participants determine when certain behaviors are appropriate and help them invent new behaviors to accomplish goals. Interventions at the level of capabilities contribute to the achievement of clusters of behaviors, not just single behaviors. The degree to which group members are able to generalize to new situations outside of the training context is a function of their attainment at this level of the intervention taxonomy.

Level 3: Changing Beliefs. This level of intervention involves participants' belief systems. In addition to developing behavioral skills and capabilities, a training program at this level must also address participants' presuppositions, beliefs, and values. Beliefs affect the permission that participants grant themselves to engage in new behaviors. The way learning fits, or does not fit, into the personal or cultural value systems of the participants determines how what they learn will be received and incorporated.

Presenters as social architects, intervene at this level when they engage participants in exploring their beliefs about a topic, use metaphors to indirectly suggest a belief structure appropriate to a topic, offer data that support belief in a practice (e.g., cooperative learning), ask questions that cause participants to challenge their beliefs, and invite participants to examine situations from the perspectives of others.

Level 4: Changing Identity. The identity level involves the group members' sense of self. Identity issues are at the core of who we think we are. All our perceptions of

182

ourselves, others, and the environment flow from our sense of identity. Ultimately, all beliefs, capabilities, and behaviors have their source in identity, thus, change at this level reverberates at all other levels (Brickey 1991).

Identity influences participants' incorporation of information at the deepest levels; it determines, first, how much responsibility participants believe they have for what is learned and, second, their commitment to putting new knowledge into action. Identity shapes the perceived mission of each person and of the group. Approaches that affect identity include the construction of a metaphor that leads a group to a new sense of identity, and workshop practices that shift the spotlight from the presenter as an information dispenser to participants as knowledge constructors.

Regard Your Presentations as Interventions into a System

Seeing a presentation as larger than what will be communicated, learned, and acted upon as a direct result of the session requires consciously linking the presentation's purposes with larger goals. One way to do this is to design an environmental impact survey, customized to the big picture of your organization. For example, for each presentation event, you might ask yourself these two questions:

- In what ways will this presentation contribute to student learning?
- What effects will this presentation have on the staff's efficacy and productivity?

You can also compose other questions related to your overall goals for your presentation.

Frame Your Presentations According to the Bigger Picture

A painting's frame defines the area of observation for the viewer. A door's frame places and strengthens the entry to another room. Similarly, framing a presentation defines the context—the viewing area—and suggests a position or perspective from which to engage the presentation. Using relational language, especially at the opening of sessions, is one way a social architect might frame a presentation: "Today's session relates to . . . " or "What are your concerns

about writing across the disciplines?" or "Research on developing teacher cognition suggests that in many settings, environmental factors depress growth. What might some of these factors be?"

The best frames provide a context for the presentation that is larger than the topic under consideration. Probably no topic, in and of itself, is of great importance. Its importance comes from its contribution to other, greater goals. To learn ways of teaching students mental arithmetic, by itself, may not be worth a great deal, but its importance increases when an audience considers how it might relate to students' self-concepts as learners and their sense of fun and excitement about schooling.

Overtly framing presentations within the framework of the organization's goals or community influences on the organization contributes to a sense of connection and understanding of a larger picture, a sense of working together on the "insiders'" agenda.

Be at Once Intolerant and Patient

Presenters who intend to transform organizations and persons are at once intolerant and patient. They are intolerant of lesser visions, of goals that keep organizations stuck in the status quo. They strive toward a new leadership style characterized by (Harmon 1988):

- A strong and deep sense of purposefulness and a vision of the future;
- A high degree of alignment of members at all levels involving commitment to the shared vision;
- A shared sense of ownership and internal responsibility for performance;
- Decentralized and flexible organizational structures; and
- An emphasis on the growth and empowerment of the individual as the key to success.

These presenters agree with Perry Pascarella (1984) that:

> A quiet revolution is taking place . . . The team building we are hearing about is secondary to the development of the individual. . . . Management is heading toward a

> new state of mind—a new perception of its own role and that of the organization. It is slowly moving from seeking power to empowering others, from controlling people to enabling them to be creative. . . . As managers make fundamental shifts in values . . . the organization undergoes a radical reorientation to a greater world view.

These same presenters are patient in their journey toward their shared vision, taking one step at a time, and pressing, always pressing, forward. These architecturally minded presenters agree with Alan Kay's view that "the best way to predict the future is to invent it."

When presenters patiently stay focused on long-term gains and outcomes, they can abandon the sometimes counterproductive urgency to force sessions to premature or shallow learnings. Patience is probably one of our greatest resources in developing individuals and organizations. And patience is possible within the context of clear goals, systems thinking, and large time frames. When presenters recognize that the presentation of the moment is not the only input regarding the topic at hand, but is only one event in a tapestry of events including other presentations, meetings, problem-solving sessions, literature, and so on, the presenter can work toward goals that are achievable in the time allotted to the current presentation.

Much learning is developmental and cannot be forced. Much learning requires adjustments of perspectives and attitudes before cognitive adaptations can be made. It is important, therefore, to stay in touch with participants as they process information. It is better to take extra time to make your main points clear and comprehensible than to rush through all you plan to cover and leave the audience incapable of carrying even your basic message home.

Become a Connoisseur of Organizational Dynamics

We believe that all the staff development work in the world will have little effect if we do not also put energy and resources into altering the deep structure of organizations. We will soon come of age regarding organizational development and the application of systems theory to

educational excellence. Transformational presenters are already learning about and focusing the energies of other leaders in this arena. Readers interested in fresh perspectives regarding the world of social architecture and developing the capacities of organizations will find the following references especially helpful: Senge 1990, Deal and Bolman 1991, Wheatley 1992.

In this book, we've highlighted major features of presentations that teach and transform. By using the maps and tools presented here and clarifying your own values, purposes, and intentions, you should be prepared to begin your journey into the world of effective presenting.

The next chapter is yours.

106

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Appendix A

Presentation Logistics

Checklist

Equipment

___ Chalkboard
___ Overhead/screen
___ VCR/monitor
___ Easel/pads
___ Audio cassette recorder
___ Microphone(s) (hand, lavaliere, cordless)
___ Extension cord
___ Other

Room Set-up

___ Room arrangement requested (attach a diagram)
___ Refreshments arranged
___ Podium/lectern
___ Head table(s)
___ High stool(s) for presenter(s)
___ Sign-in table
___ Breakout room (for entire workshop or specific times or days)
___ Other

Supplies

___ Handouts
___ Chalk, eraser
___ Felt pens (water base)
___ Masking tape

____Overhead pens (washable)
____Blank transparencies
____Sign-in sheet
____Name tags
____Name cards
____Pencils, scratch paper
____Music cassettes
____Other

Appendix B

Learner-Centered Psychological Principles

THE FOLLOWING TWELVE PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES PERTAIN TO individual learners and the learning process. They focus on psychological factors that are primarily internal to the learner, while recognizing external environmental or contextual factors with which these internal factors interact. These principles attempt to deal holistically with learners in the context of real-world learning situations. Therefore, each learner must be understood as a whole being and not treated in isolation. The first ten principles are subdivided and refer to metacognitive, cognitive, affective, developmental, or social factors and issues. The final two principles cut across the first ten and focus on what we know about individual differences. All of the principles are intended to apply to all learners from pre-school age on.

Metacognitive and Cognitive Factors

Principle 1: Learning is a natural process that is active, volitional, and internally mediated; it is a goal-directed process of constructing meaning from information and experience filtered through each individual's unique perceptions, thoughts, and feelings.

Principle 2: The learner seeks to create internally consistent, meaningful, and sensible

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representations of knowledge regardless of the quantity and quality of data available.

Principle 3: The learner organizes information in ways that associate and link new information with existing knowledge in uniquely meaningful ways.

Principle 4: Higher-order strategies for "thinking about thinking"—for overseeing and monitoring mental operations—facilitate creative and critical thinking and the development of expertise.

Affective Factors

Principle 5: The depth and breadth of information processed, and what and how much is learned and remembered, is influenced by (a) self-awareness and beliefs about one's learning ability (personal control, competence, and ability); (b) clarity and saliency of personal goals; (c) personal expectations for success or failure; (d) affect, emotion, and general states of mind; and (e) the resulting motivation to learn.

Principle 6: Individuals are naturally curious and enjoy learning in the absence of intense negative conditions and emotions (e.g., insecurity, worrying about failure, being self-conscious or shy, fearing corporal punishment or verbal ridicule, or stigmatizing labels).

Principle 7: Curiosity, creativity, and higher-order thinking processes are stimulated by learning tasks of optimal difficulty, relevancy, authenticity, challenge, and novelty for each student.

Developmental Factors

Principle 8: Individuals proceed through orderly, identifiable progressions of physical, intellectual, emotional, and social

development that are a function of unique genetic and environmental factors.

Social Factors

Principle 9: Learning is facilitated by social interactions and communication with others in a variety of flexible, diverse (cross-age, multicultural, varied family background, etc.), and adaptive instructional settings.

Principle 10: Learning and self-esteem are heightened when individuals are in respectful and caring relationships with others who see their potential, genuinely appreciate their unique talents, and accept them as individuals.

Individual Differences

Principle 11: Although basic principles of learning, motivation, and effective instruction apply to all learners (regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, presence or absence of physical handicaps, religion, or socioeconomic status), learners differ in their preferences for learning mode and strategies, the pace at which they learn, and their unique capabilities in particular areas. These differences are a function of both environment (what is learned and communicated in different cultures or other social groups) and heredity (what occurs naturally as a function of genes and resulting differential capacities).

Principle 12: Beliefs and thoughts, resulting from prior learning and based on unique interpretations of external experiences and messages, become each individual's basis for constructing reality or interpreting life experiences.

How to Make Presentations that Teach and Transform

In this practical guide to designing and delivering interesting and effective presentations for adult audiences, Garmston and Wellman cover the five stages of a presentation and offer tips for executing each one. They discuss stage fright and how you can use it to your advantage, and they explore the use of macro maps for staying focused during presentations. They also provide tips for getting to know audiences and communicating with participants who have different backgrounds and learning styles. The book includes several active learning activities you can use to strengthen your presentations.

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Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

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